Scrap

3

ART & STORY BY
Sakura Kinoshita
X
Kazuko Higashiyama

tact 3

木下さくら × 東山和子

tactics

Sakura Kinoshita × Kazuko Higashiyama

3

Bonus comic 2 175

Bonus comic 1 159

chapter 8 99

chapter 7 5

tactics

Volume 3
by Sakura Kinoshita and
Kazuko Higashiyama

tactics Volume 3

ART & STORY BY: Sakura Kinoshita × Kazuko Higashiyama

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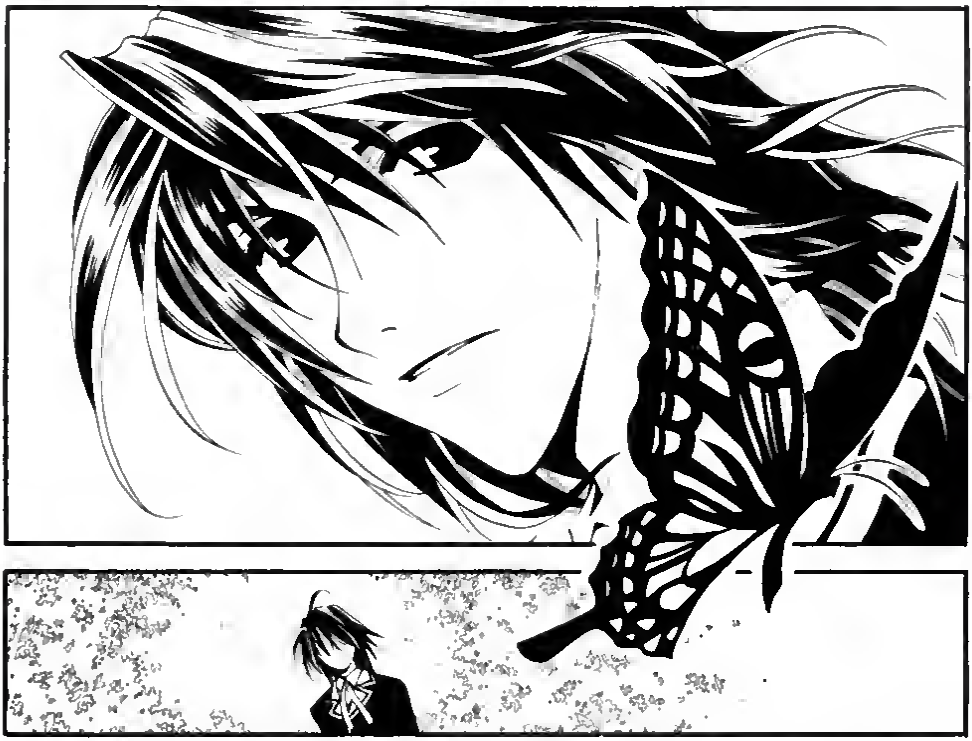
Dear
GOD,
Please...
Please
Hear my
Prayer.

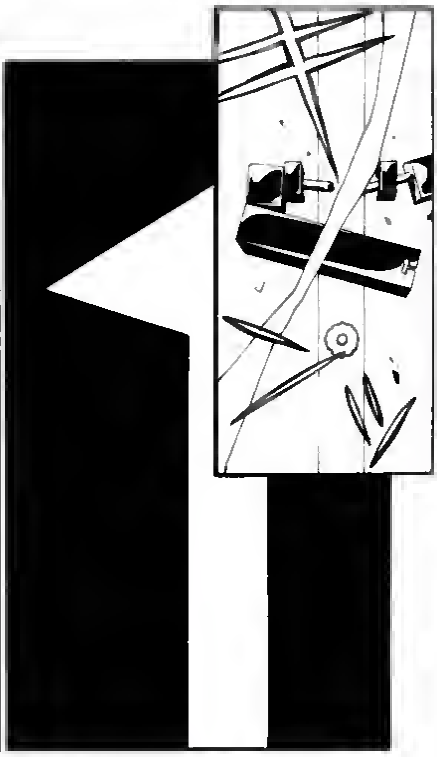
CHAPTER 7

tactics 3

CONTINUED ON PAGE 104.

tactics 3





THANK YOU FOR PUTTING OUT THE COMMISSION TO MASTER UNKAI MISS KYOUKO SUZAKUIN
I, THE HUMBLE KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA, WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO HELP YOU.
MIGHT I BE SO BOLD AS TO CALL YOU KYOUKO, MADAM?
ドキッ
Ho ho ho ho!
MY, MY. YOU'RE JUST AS OBSEQUIOUS AS MASTER UNKAI DESCRIBED, ICHINOMIYA-SAN.

WHAT DID MASTER UNKAI TELL YOU ABOUT THIS CASE?
HUH?
"WHAT D'YA SAY, KANTAROU? DON'T YOU THINK YOU OUGHTA SETTLE DOWN?"
"SHE'S A RICH AND BEAUTIFUL WIDOW."
HOW DARE THAT OLD COOT MOCK ME! MY LOVE IS PURE AS DRIVEN SNOW!
HM? OH, HE MENTIONED THAT YOUR FAMILY OVERSEES THE SUZAKU FESTIVAL AND THE FIVE GRAINS GOOD HARVEST RITUAL LATER THIS WEEK.
I'VE BEEN REQUESTED TO ASSIST IN YOUR SHRINE MAIDEN'S FORTUNE TELLING.
WE DON'T NEED YOUR HELP!

AND MOTHER, THE VILLAGERS ARE GOSSIPING AGAIN. THEY'RE WORRIED THAT THE FESTIVAL WON'T BE SAFE THIS YEAR.
MAI! HOW RUDE OF YOU TO START TALKING WITHOUT INTRODUCING YOURSELF TO OUR GUEST.
THAT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT BUT COULD YOU GO INTO MORE DETAIL ON WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING HERE?
WELL... THE TRUTH IS, THE YOUNG MEN OF THE VILLAGE HAVE BEEN DYING UNDER ODD CIRCUMSTANCES.
BUT DESPITE THE RUMORS THEY'VE ALL BEEN ACCIDENTS THAT HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SUZAKU FESTIVAL.
SOME PEOPLE SAY IT'S A GRUDGE OF MY RECENTLY DECEASED FATHER.
MAI!

HELLO THERE, MAI-CHAN. I'M KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA. YOU MUST BE THE SHRINE MAIDEN WHO'S HANDLING THE FORTUNE
NO! I CAN'T TELL FORTUNES!
ER...I'M SORRY.
BEHAVE YOURSELF, MAI! ICHINOMIYA-SAN, OUR FORTUNE-TELLER IS ACTUALLY HER TWIN SISTER. IS MIYABI WITH YOU, MAI?
..NO. HOW SHOULD I KNOW WHERE SHE IS?
AND SHE DOESN'T NEED ANY HELP.
AS LONG AS SHE HAS ME, SHE'LL BE FINE.
UM, MOTHER...?

WELL, WELL THAT'S SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE
コン コン
MIYABI!
Wow, you are identical.
MIYABI'S BECOME A WOMAN.
Excuse me?
UH...
WHAT HAPPENED TO MIYABI, MOTHER?
MIYABI'S A..
I WANT TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE FESTIVAL.
I'M OFF TO EASE ANY ANXIETIES THE VILLAGERS MAY BE HOLDING.
HM? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
OH, BOY. MISS SUZAKUIN, I'LL BE OUT UNTIL DINNER.

HARUKA!
I DON'T BELONG HERE, KANTAROU
FINISHED "GREETING" HER YET? I'VE BEEN HERE FOR AGES.
LOOK AT YOU, *SALIVATING* OVER THAT WOMAN.
??
DUTY CALLS, HARUKA!
YEAH--AS SOON AS I PUT MY THINGS AWAY
ARE WE LEAVING?

UH... UM...
WE'LL BE BACK LATER, MISS!
SOME-THING WRONG?
TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH, HARUKA-SAN.
MY SON PAID FOR WHAT HE DID.
Thank you?
Thank you for what?! What did you do, Haruka?!
Nothing. Quiet.

IT ALL STARTED WHEN HE NOTICED THAT SWEETHEART LADY MIYABI HE WAS BEING TOO OBVIOUS.
I'M JUST GLAD HE DIDN'T DIE FROM IT.
HE HAD HIS EYE ON HER FOR HER MONEY AND WAS BITTEN BY A MOUNTAIN SNAKE.
"PAID"?
OTHER MEN WHO TRIED TO INFILTRATE THE SUZAKUIN FAMILY GOT ATTACKED BY WOLVES, CRUSHED BY FALLING TREES.
GOSAKU WAS EATEN BY SOME MYSTERIOUS BEAST.
LADY KYOUKO IS CERTAINLY BEAUTIFUL, BUT SOME KIND OF ANCIENT GRUDGE MUST COME WITH THAT LOVELY FACE

...SO? DID ANYTHING HAPPEN?
NOT A THING.
REST EASY, MA'AM.
MAYBE THE SOURCE OF THOSE ACCIDENTS IS A GRUDGE OR DIVINE PUNISHMENT.
AT THIS RATE, I'M NOT SO SURE THE SUZAKU FESTIVAL WILL END WELL.
IT'S KEEPING ME UP AT NIGHT.
BUT WHATEVER THE CASE, I'VE COME TO PUT AN END TO THAT MYSTERY.

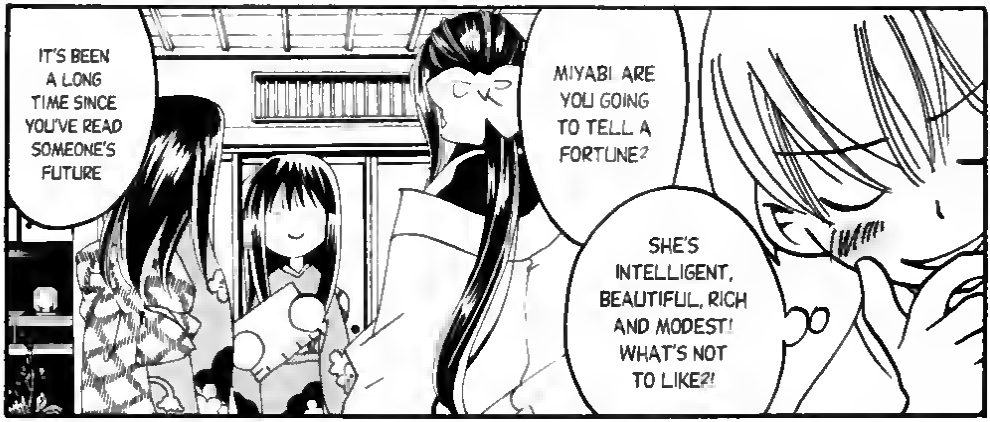
IT'S TOO SOON TO WRITE EVERYTHING OFF AS "COINCIDENCE."
THERE ARE STILL SOME HOUSES I HAVEN'T CHECKED-- I GUESS I SHOULD KEEP INVESTIGATING
I KNEW IT. Malicious bastard.
NOT A SINGLE, WRETCHED THING. THERE'S SO MUCH PEACE AND QUIET HERE--IT S DRIVING ME CRAZY.
ARE YOU BOYS THE GUESTS AT THE SUZAKUIN HOUSE?
LADY MIYABI LOVES THESE STRAWBERRY CANDIES.
WOULD YOU PASS THEM ON TO HER FOR ME?
MIYABI-CHAN LIKES STRAWBERRIES, HUH? Fits her image.
LADY MAI IS MORE LIKE LADY KYOUKO-- SHE'S COMPOSED AND HARD TO APPROACH
LADY MIYABI, ON THE OTHER HAND, BRINGS OUT THE DOTING SIDE OF EVERYONE

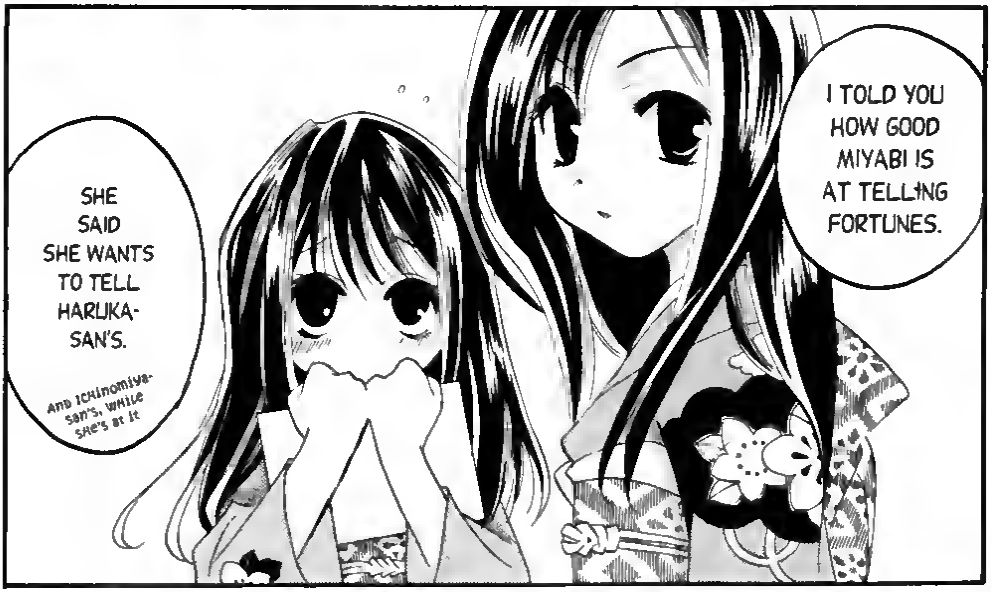
THEY'RE EXACTLY WHAT I IMAGINE PERFECT TWIN SETS TO BE.
IF LADY MAI IS THE MOVEMENT, THEN LADY MIYABI IS THE CALM. THEY REALLY ARE LIKE ONE SOUL IN TWO BODIES.
BUT THOSE SISTERS DO EVERYTHING TOGETHER.
I'M HUNGRY
HEY, SPEAK OF THE DEVIL!
I'M SORRY, SISTER...
AS LONG AS YOU GET IT NOW, MIYABI.

WHAT A PICTURE THOSE TWO MAKE, HM?
.....
THEY DON'T LOOK DANGEROUS
DANGER-OUS?
What are you talking about?
PRUNNGG

THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL, LADIES!
I'M KIND OF SELF-CONSCIOUS ACCEPTING SUCH AN EXTRAVAGANT WELCOME FROM YOU.
I'M NOT VERY SKILLED AT SUCH THINGS AT ALL.
NO, NO!

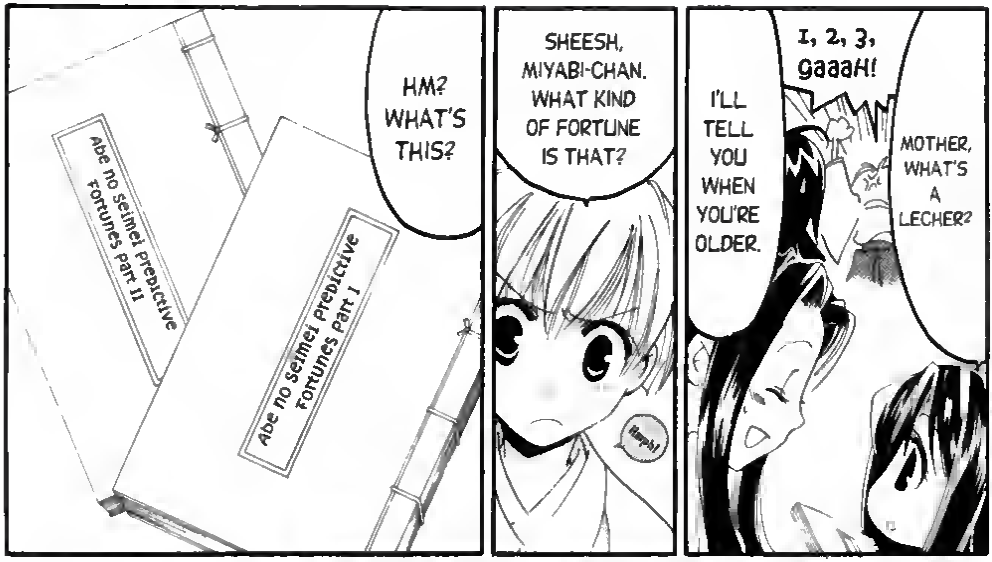
tactics 3


IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE YOU'VE READ SOMEONE'S FUTURE
MIYABI ARE YOU GOING TO TELL A FORTUNE?
SHE'S INTELLIGENT, BEAUTIFUL, RICH AND MODEST! WHAT'S NOT TO LIKE?!


I TOLD YOU HOW GOOD MIYABI IS AT TELLING FORTUNES.
SHE SAID SHE WANTS TO TELL HARUKA-SAN'S.
And Ichinomiya-san's, while she's at it

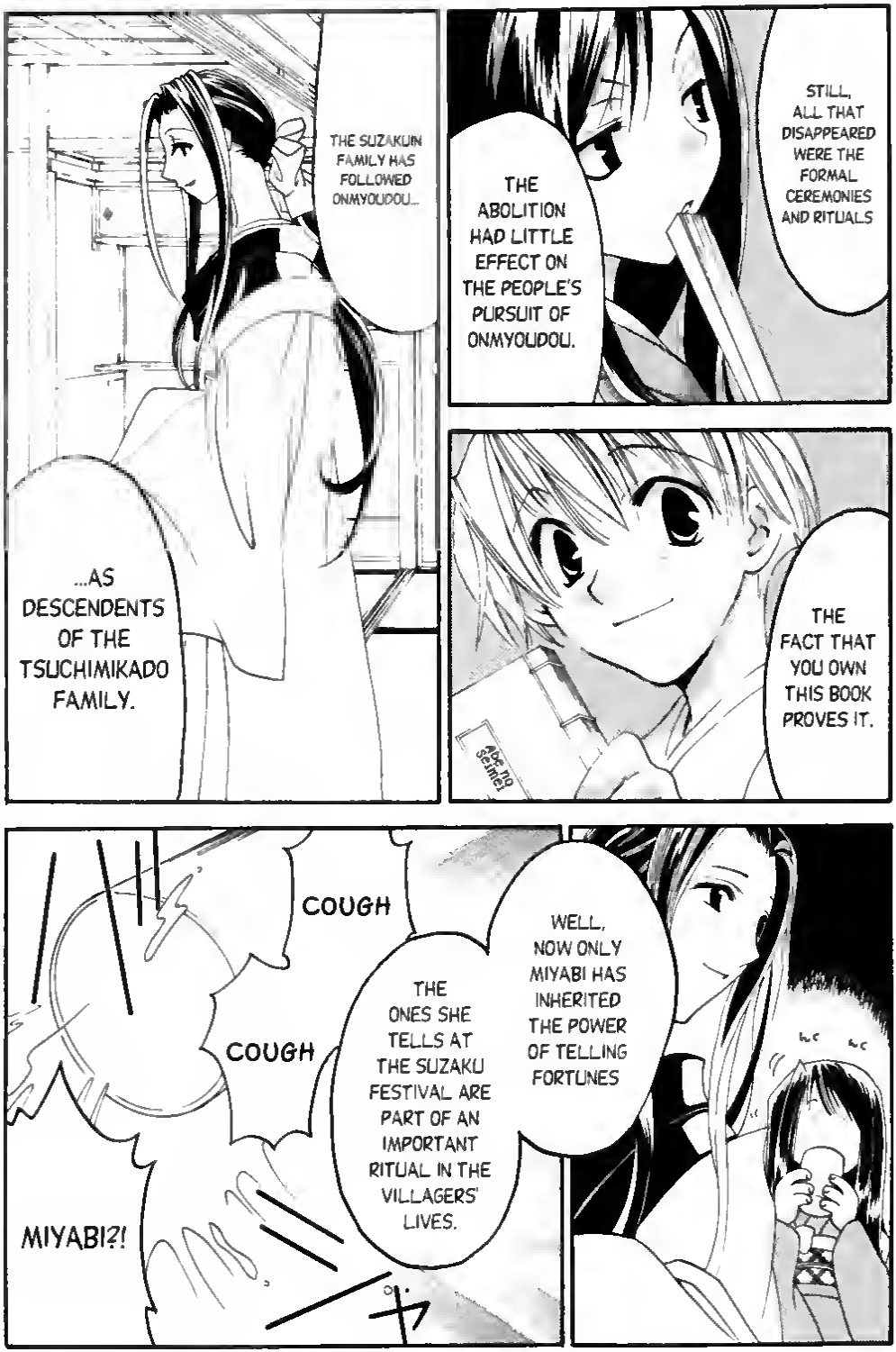
While she's at it?
TODAY IS THE DAY OF THE DRAGON.
AND HARUKA-SAN CAME FROM THE SOUTHWEST SO THAT MEANS

WELL, I DON'T *DISLIKE* FIGHTING...
BUT I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT SECOND BIT.
YOU'RE SKILLED AT MARTIAL ARTS AND ENJOY FIGHTS
BUT DEEP DOWN, YOU'RE A REALLY GOOD MAN.
HOW ABOUT ME, MIYABI-CHAN?
おぉぉ
GASP!
NO, IT'S TRUE!
YOU *ARE* A GOOD MAN!
EMPHASIS!
YOU'RE A LIAR AND A LECHER.
YOU HAVE EITHER A DEAD PERSON OR A THIEF INSIDE YOU.
THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS.
LET'S SEE
KANTAROU-SAN...


HM? WHAT'S THIS?
Abe no Seimei Predictive Fortunes Part II
Abe no Seimei Predictive Fortunes Part I
SHEESH, MIYABI-CHAN. WHAT KIND OF FORTUNE IS THAT?
Hmph!
I'LL TELL YOU WHEN YOU'RE OLDER.
1, 2, 3, gaaaH!
MOTHER, WHAT'S A LECHER?

IT'S ONMYOUDOU

IT WAS POPULAR DURING THE HEIAN PERIOD. WHEN THE MEIJI GOVERNMENT TOOK POLITICAL MEASURES TO ISOLATE SHINTO AND BUDDHISM, ONMYOUDOU WAS SUPPOSEDLY WIPED OUT
ONMYOUDOU USES ANCIENT ASTRONOMICAL KNOWLEDGE AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE YIN-YANG/ FIVE ELEMENTS RELATIONSHIP


THE SUZAKUIN FAMILY HAS FOLLOWED ONMYOUDOU...
...AS DESCENDENTS OF THE TSUCHIMIKADO FAMILY.
STILL, ALL THAT DISAPPEARED WERE THE FORMAL CEREMONIES AND RITUALS
THE ABOLITION HAD LITTLE EFFECT ON THE PEOPLE'S PURSUIT OF ONMYOUDOU.
THE FACT THAT YOU OWN THIS BOOK PROVES IT.
Abe no Seimei
WELL, NOW ONLY MIYABI HAS INHERITED THE POWER OF TELLING FORTUNES
THE ONES SHE TELLS AT THE SUZAKU FESTIVAL ARE PART OF AN IMPORTANT RITUAL IN THE VILLAGERS' LIVES.
COUGH
COUGH
MIYABI?!

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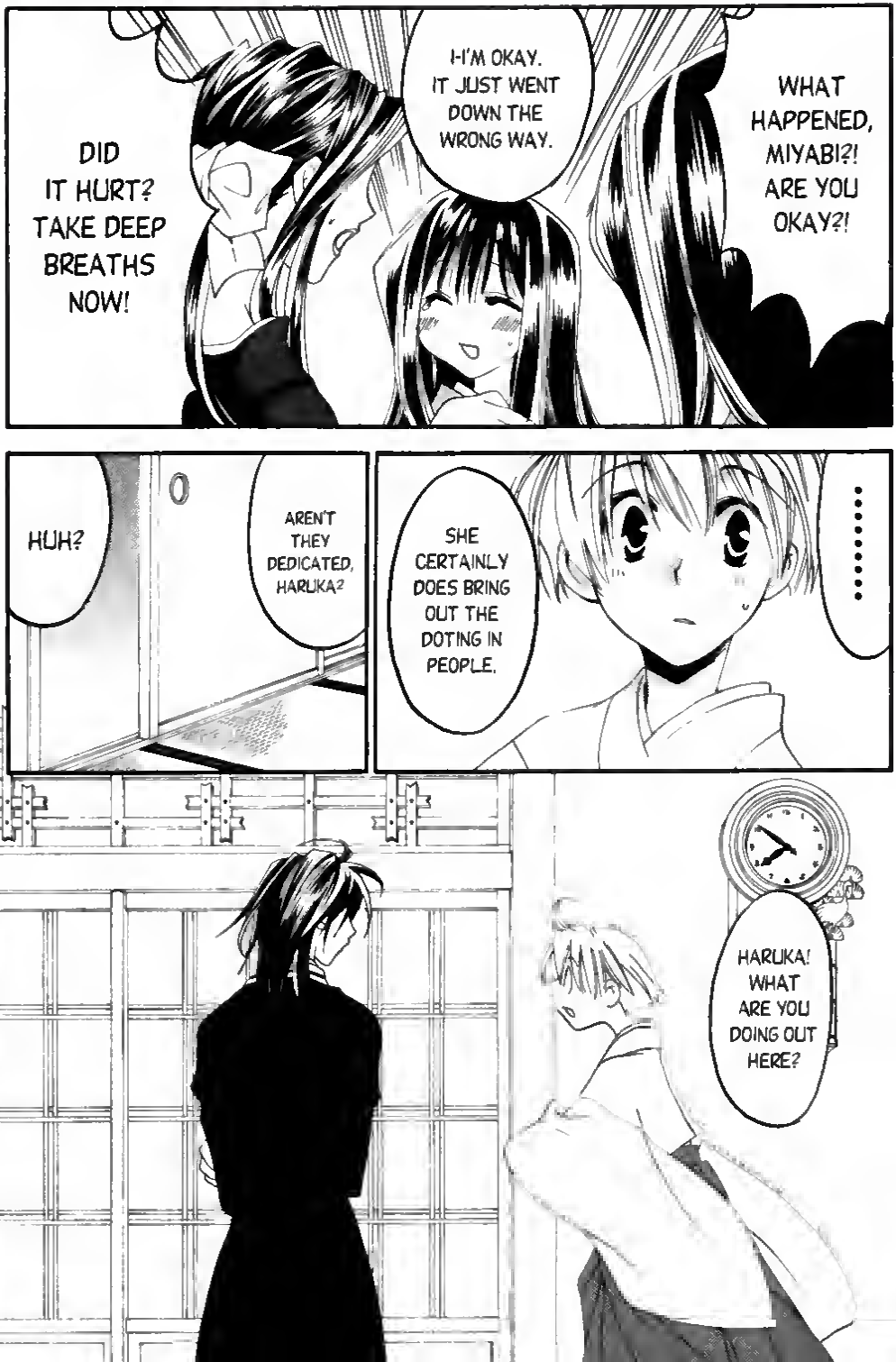
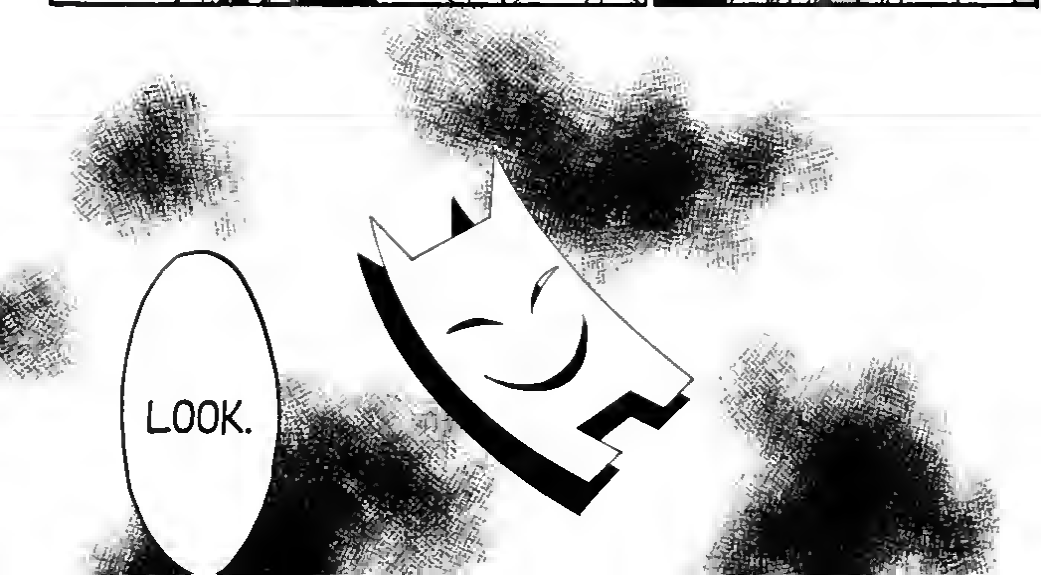

WHAT HAPPENED, MIYABI?! ARE YOU OKAY?!
I-I'M OKAY. IT JUST WENT DOWN THE WRONG WAY.
DID IT HURT? TAKE DEEP BREATHS NOW!
.....
SHE CERTAINLY DOES BRING OUT THE DOTING IN PEOPLE.
AREN'T THEY DEDICATED, HARUKA?
HUH?
HARUKA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?

I DON'T LIKE ONMYOU DOU
I DIDN'T WANT TO LISTEN TO YOU TALK ABOUT IT.
WHAT?
HARU-KA.
OH.
DOES IT.. HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOUR PAST?

DON'T MAKE THAT FACE.
UM. THAT WAS KIND OF MEAN
IT'S CREEPING ME OUT.
THIS WAS MY SON'S ROOM.
TO THIS DAY I HAVE TROUBLE BELIEVING HE'S REALLY DEAD. SO I'VE KEPT IT JUST AS IT'S ALWAYS BEEN.

WOW.
SHE WASN'T KIDDING.
WHEN YOU LEAVE A ROOM LIKE IT WAS WHEN SOMEONE WAS ALIVE, IT CAN CONFUSE THE SPIRITS. I CAN'T SAY I APPROVE...
BUT IT IS CONVENIENT AT THE MOMENT.
HE WAS BITTEN AND KILLED BY SOMETHING IN THIS PLACE.
On amiriti un Hatta.
On hazara settaun Jaku
On amiriti un Hatta.

HARUKA! UNDER THE FUTON!


LOOK.

AND I CAN'T HAVE THE FESTIVAL START LIKE THIS
I HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE.
WHO WOULD PUT THAT CURSE THERE, I WONDER?
NOT AGAIN! WOULD YOU KEEP IT DOWN?!
BECAUSE AGRICULTURE IS RULED BY NATURAL PHENOMENA, IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO THE VILLAGERS TO OBTAIN GOD'S PROTECTION. IN OTHER WORDS, CUT THEM SOME SLACK.
THEY'RE PREPARING FOR A FESTIVAL TO WELCOME GOD AND ASK FOR HIS DIVINE MESSAGE AND PROTECTION.
I DON'T GET WHY HUMANS DO WHAT THEY DO. REPEATING THEIR MISTAKES EVERY YEAR— IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU SICK!
HM?
HUH? YOU CAN SEE ME?!
BAH I--

HUH?
IT'S RIDICULOUS!
UGH! THAT STUPID GOLD DIGGER WON'T STOP FLIRTING.
ずとととと
EEP!
ER... MAI-CHAN?
Humans are scary!

HARUKA-SAN!
...WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I'M PROTECTING THIS COCOON SEE?
THOSE CROWS HAVE THEIR EYES ON IT.

I LOVE BUTTER-FLIES.
SO, I... I WANT TO HELP IT GROW AND HATCH.
I'M SORRY.
I MUST BE BORING YOU.

I NEED YOU ALL TO STAY OUT OF THIS GARDEN
GOT IT?
NOW YOU CAN STOP WORRYING
OH...
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
OOOH.
I SAW THAT.

STOP DRAGGING ME ALONG ON YOUR PUB CRAWLS.
I'M HERE TO GATHER INFORMATION, THANK YOU.
わいわい
AND THERE'S SOMETHING I WANTED TO ASK YOU, HARUKA.
HOW CAN I LAND MISTRESS HOT STUFF?
I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN LEARNING THE WAYS OF THE MANWHORE
HIC

I MEAN, THINK OF THE KIND OF MONEY I'D BE MARRYING INTO! I COULD KISS MY LIFE OF POVERTY GOODBYE!
HELP ME, HARUKA. WHAT KIND OF MOVE WOULD YOU MAKE?
WHAT KIND OF MOVE? I GUESS I'D JUST...
YEAH, RIGHT. WHY WOULD I TELL YOU SOMETHING LIKE THAT?!
DON'T BE SELFISH, YOU LITTLE GIGOLO!
I WONDER IF THE FESTIVAL WILL WORK OUT THIS YEAR.
ALL WE CAN DO IS FOLLOW LADY MIYABI'S PREDICTIONS.
BUT AFTER EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED AROUND THE SUZAKUIN FAMILY, I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED TO SEE ANOTHER DISASTER
HM... THAT'S THE FLIRT WHO GAVE FLOWERS TO MIYABI CHAN EARLIER

WHAT WAS THAT?!
BY THE WAY-- I HEARD THAT THE HEAD OF THE SUZAKUIN FAMILY GOT HERSELF A MAN.
SLUUUUP
OH, YEAH. YOU SAID YOU'VE BEEN AT THE SUZAKUIN HOUSE A LOT LATELY
ME? ER... I'M JUST WORRIED ABOUT MIYABI-CHAN. IT'S NOT LIKE I'M A GOLD DIGGER OR ANYTHING
WHAAAAT?!
HE'S ONLY 23--AND HANDSOME, THEY SAY.
SEEMS HE'S THE SECOND SON OF A REALLY RICH FAMILY
YOU SAID IT!
THAT'S EXACTLY THE LADY'S TASTE IN MEN!
YOU WERE SERIOUS ABOUT HER?
STUPID... GOLD DIGGER!

CHING
AAAH!
A MONSTER!

WAAAH!
Naumaku sanmanda bazaradan kan.
GRRRR
臨・兵・闘・者
皆・陣・裂・在・前

HARUKA!
I KNEW IT.

BUT THIS KIND OF SPELL NEEDS CONSIDERABLE POWER.
THIS ISN'T A VENGEFUL SPIRIT OR DIVINE PUNISHMENT.
THIS IS A CURSE.
WHO WOULD DO THIS...?
HUH?
MIYABI-CHAN COLLAPSED?!

. MIYABI HAS BEEN WEAK SINCE THE DAY SHE WAS BORN
BUT RECENTLY WE LEARNED... SHE'S CONTRACTED A DISEASE SOMETHING THE DOCTORS CAN'T DO A THING ABOUT.
MIYABI-CHAN IS...
WE WERE TOLD HER DAYS ARE NUMBERED SHE COULD DIE AT ANY TIME
BUT SHE MUST PRESS FORWARD TO TELL THE VILLAGERS THEIR INVALUABLE FORTUNE
ALL I CAN DO IS WATCH OVER HER

I JUST WANT HER TO BE HAPPY IN WHAT REMAINS OF HER LIFE!
WELL, THAT EXPLAINS A LOT.
YOU AND MAI-CHAN SEEMED SO WORRIED ABOUT HER.
MAI! HOW IS MIYABI?!
SHE'S SLEEPING UNDER SEDATION NOW
BUT SHE ASKED FOR SOMETHING.
SHE WANTS HARUKA-SAN AT HER BEDSIDE.

UM, MAI-CHAN?
I'M COMING IN.
ビシャーン!
MAI-CHA--
!
ない

I'M... I'M SORRY.
H-HARUKA-SAN!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME.
I WONDER IF I'LL LAST TO SEE YOU AND YOUR FRIEND LEAVE.
I THINK MY BODY IS... FAILING

WELL....
...HARUKA-SAN. WHEN THE FESTIVAL'S OVER, YOU'RE GOING BACK HOME, RIGHT?
THAT'S THE PLAN.
creak
.....
WHAT ARE YOU--?
HARUKA-SAN...

PLEASE.
DO WHAT YOU WILL TO ME.
I'M NOT A CHILD ANYMORE.
W- WAIT. I...

IT'S VERY NAUGHTY TO PEEK INTO A GIRL'S ROOM
YOU'VE BEEN *BAD*, KANTAROU-SAN.
PINNING A MAN DOWN IS EQUALLY NAUGHTY, MAI-CHAN.
.....
I LIKE...
BEING ON TOP?
I LIKE *YOU*, YOU FOOL.

WHY DON'T YOU CHOOSE ME INSTEAD OF MY MOTHER?
THE FORTUNE AND PROPERTIES ARE YOURS FOR THE TAKING.
AN OFFER LIKE THAT... MUST BE HARD TO RESIST.
ISN'T IT, KANTAROU-SA--
YOU MUST NEED ME FOR SOMETHING.

AND YOU'RE A BIT TOO YOUNG TO OFFER ME A DEAL LIKE THAT, SWEETHEART.
GET OUT OF MY ROOM!
WHY?!
...THAT WAS AN ODD TURN OF EVENTS.

WHY ISN'T ANYTHING GOING THE WAY I PLANNED?!
THIS ISN'T WHAT YOU PROMISED!
DO YOU HATE ME?

I JUST CAN'T SEEM TO DO ANYTHING RIGHT...
YOU'RE LONELY AND UPSET.
I HAPPENED TO BE NEARBY.
YOU WOULD'VE DONE THE SAME TO ANYBODY.
YOU'RE AWFULLY FORWARD, CONSIDERING YOUR AGE.
I HAVE NO INTEREST IN BEING A PART OF YOUR EXPERIMENTATION.
BUT...

I LIKE YOU.
I REALLY DO LIKE YOU!
IT'S THE TRUTH, HARUKA-SAN!

..AT LAST, THE SUZAKU FESTIVAL IS TOMORROW
CAN I COUNT ON YOU FOR THE FORTUNE-READING, ICHINOMIYA-SAN?
OH. UM...
WITH PLEASURE.
I WONDER HOW MIYABI-CHAN'S FEELING.
MIYABI-CHAN? ARE YOU--?

WHA?
I JUST... I ASKED MY SISTER TO DO THE FORTUNE-TELLING FOR ME.
AND I'M TELLING YOU TO WATCH YOUR PLACE!
WHAT HAPPENED HERE? WHY ARE YOU TWO FIGHTING?!

YOU'VE NEVER GONE AGAINST ME BEFORE.
AND I'M ALWAYS THERE TO PROTECT YOU FROM EVERYTHING!
DO YOU WANT TO GET LOCKED UP IN THE STORAGE HOUSE AGAIN?!
DOES SHE WHAT?!
IT'S BECAUSE OF THAT MAN, ISN'T IT?!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN AT TOMORROW'S FESTIVAL.
AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU!
ガラッ

tactics 3

OH...HOW DID YOU KNOW? NO ONE ELSE EVER SUSPECTED.
I'M GUESSING MAI-CHAN *DOES* HAVE YOUR POWER.
WHY WON'T SHE DO THE FORTUNE-TELLING?
I'M SURE HER ABILITY IS WEAKER THAN MIYABI-CHAN'S. THOUGH
MY SISTER'S ALWAYS LOOKING OUT FOR ME AND MAKING SURE NOBODY THINKS SHE HAS THE POWER
DESPITE YOUR *FLATTERING* READING OF ME, I'M VERY GOOD AT WHAT I DO
I WANT TO SEE IT FLY.
BUT BUTTERFLIES ONLY LIVE FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS WHEN I THINK ABOUT THAT...
THERE'S A COCOON OVER THERE. I THINK IT'LL BECOME A BUTTERFLY SOON.
BY THE WAY MIYABI-CHAN WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN LOOKING AT?

SO PROOF THAT IT LIVED WILL ALWAYS REMAIN
BUT YOU'LL REMEMBER HOW BEAUTIFUL IT WAS, WON'T YOU?

I HOPE THAT SOMEBODY
REMEMBERS THAT I WAS ALIVE

ARE YOU READY FOR THE SUZAKU FESTIVAL TODAY?
I PLAN TO...
MAI CHAN'S LOCKED HERSELF IN.
ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO DO THIS MIYABI CHAN?

WHY DON'T YOU JUST LET ME DO IT IN YOUR PLACE?
NO.
ガボ…ゴボ。
MIYABI-CHAN?!
I WANT TO LEAVE THE PEOPLE...
...PROOF THAT I WAS ALIVE. EVEN IF IT ISN'T MUCH.
YOU WANT ME TO STAND GUARD OVER THE OLDER TWIN?

AND DEFINITELY WATCH OUT FOR TRAPS.
YOU REALIZE WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE, RIGHT?
.....
JUST STAYING AT THE MANSION SHOULD DO IT.
YEAH. AND I'VE GOT TO GET GOING IF ANYTHING HAPPENS. USE YOUR THUNDER-- I'LL SEE IT AND COME JOIN YOU.
JUST MAKE SURE NOT TO HURT ANYONE.

GOOD LUCK AT THE SUZAKU FESTIVAL.
YES! THANK YOU.
SOMETIMES YOUR SISTER NEEDS *YOUR* SUPPORT, MIYABI-CHAN.

THESE COUNTRYSIDE FESTIVALS ARE ELABORATE.
HOW LONG SHOULD I BE DOING THIS? KANTAROU WASN'T CLEAR, AS USUAL.
HUH?!
IS THAT TYPICAL FOR A FESTI-VAL?!
Humans are unbelievable.
I--
WHAT?!
?!
...NNGH!
IS THIS EVIL ENERGY...?

HaaH...
THIS FEELING_
HaaH!
I REMEM-BER IT.

MIYABI-CHAN?
THIS IS HARUKA-SAN'S.
H-HE'S CALLING FOR YOU, KANTAROU-SAN. PLEASE GO TO HIM.
I'LL BE FINE.
UH... ALL RIGHT.

I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WEREN'T HUMAN.
Hff.
YOUR ATTACKS ARE AWFULLY UNFOCUSED, MISTER YOUKAI.
HEH HEH HEH.
Haah
I MAY NOT HAVE MIYABI'S FORTUNE-TELLING POWER...
...BUT I CAN DO *THIS*.

THE... THE EVIL POWER IS GONE.
WHAT?!
WHY?!
TAIZAN-FUKUN-SAMA!
WHY CAN'T I KILL THIS MAN?!
?
WHY ARE YOU ATTACKING ME?!

THAT DOES IT! I HATE EVERY-ONE!
OW!
HARUKA, YOU'RE HURT! WERE YOU PULLING YOUR PUNCHES BECAUSE SHE'S A GIRL?!
KANTAROU!
You're completely in my way again!

LISTEN TO ME VERY CAREFULLY, MAI-CHAN.
THE CREATURE YOU'RE ENSHRINING BEHIND YOU...
...ISN'T TAIZAN-FUKUN.
?!
D-DON'T BE STUPID. I KNOW WHAT--
YOU WERE PRAYING TO TAIZANFUKUN FOR A CURE TO MIYABI-CHAN'S ILLNESS, WEREN'T YOU?
SO WHAT IF I WAS? TAIZANFUKUN-SAMA IS THE GOD OF THE DEAD--HE REIGNS OVER HUMANS' LIVES AND DEATHS.
AND HE'S ONE OF THE CHIEF GODS OF ONMYOUDOU!

THE TAIZANFUKUN BEHIND YOU TOLD YOU TO SACRIFICE MEN TO SAVE MIYABI-CHAN
AND HE GRANTED YOU THE POWER TO PLACE CURSES.
FINE! YOU FIGURED IT OUT!
I PUT CURSES ON THE MEN WHO CAME NEAR MIYABI, OKAY?!
STOP WASTING YOUR TIME!
AND NOW IT'S HARUKA'S TURN! THIS TIME I KNOW IT'S ALL GOING TO--

A MOUNTAIN OF MALE SACRIFICES WON'T SAVE MIYABI-CHAN.
YOU JUST NEED A SINGLE HUMAN WILLING TO DIE IN HER PLACE.
THAT'S THE KIND OF SENTIMENT THAT MOVES TAIZANFUKUN.
EEEWW

BUT...YOUR SPIRITUAL POWER COULD NEVER SUMMON TAIZANFUKUN IN THE FIRST PLACE.
Y-YOU'RE A LIAR
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO TELL ME?
EVERYTHING I DID WAS A *WASTE?*
YOU MEAN I KILLED MY FATHER AND THE VILLAGERS...
...AND THAT STILL WON'T SAVE MIYABI?!
I DON'T KNOW
FEEDING THIS GIRL LIES AND TAKING ADVANTAGE OF HER..

IT'S COMING AFTER ME?!
WHAT ARE YOU REALLY AFTER?
AND WHAT *ARE* YOU?!

HAAH...
HAAH...

YAAAAAAY!
.....
JUST LIKE I THOUGHT. SOMEONE ELSE WAS BEHIND THIS.
A SHIKIGAMI!
I CAN HEAR THE VILLAGERS FROM HERE
IT MUST HAVE BEEN A GOOD FORTUNE.
YEAH? THEN I GUESS MIYABI-CHAN MANAGED TO PULL THROUGH.

.....
...WHAT IS IT, MOTHER?
MIYABI!

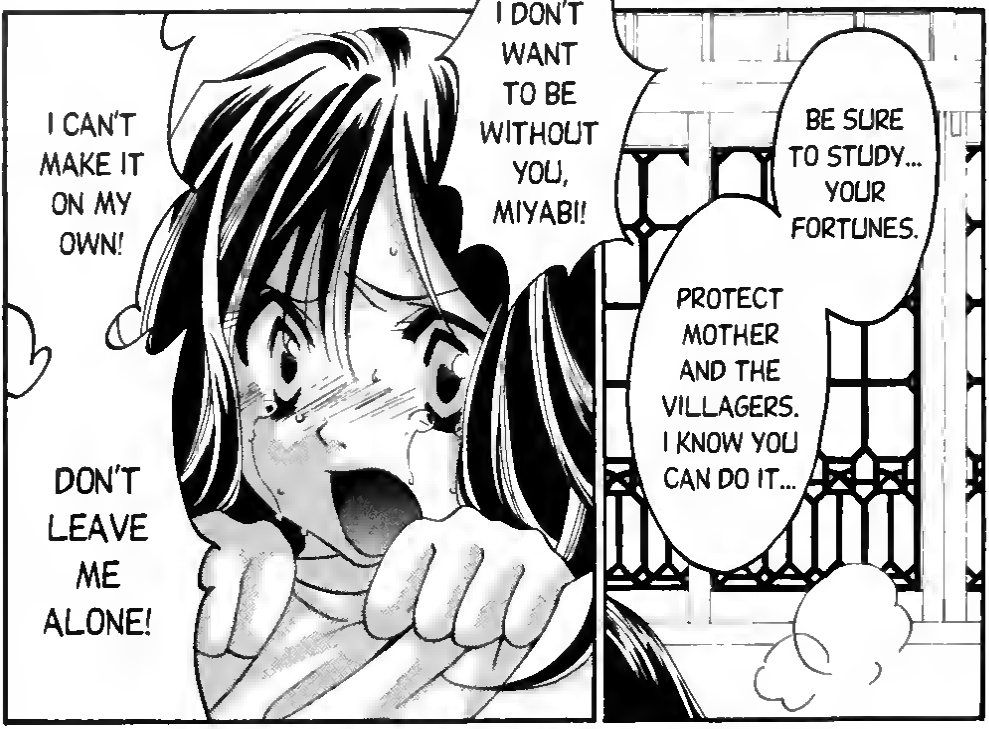
HOLD ON, MIYABI!
WAIT...
MIYABI, NO!
SHE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH LONGER.
IT'S A MIRACLE SHE LASTED THIS LONG
LET ME TAKE HER PLACE!
YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO PRAY TO TAIZANFUKUN-SAMA, RIGHT?!

...I'M SORRY.
I CAN'T DO THAT.
WHY...?

MIYABI
LISTEN, SISTER

IT'S OKAY... DON'T BLAME KANTAROU-SAN
THIS IS GOD'S DECISION.

WHY DO YOU SAY THAT? I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT!
SISTER...


I DON'T WANT TO BE WITHOUT YOU, MIYABI!
I CAN'T MAKE IT ON MY OWN!
DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE!
BE SURE TO STUDY... YOUR FORTUNES.
PROTECT MOTHER AND THE VILLAGERS. I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT...

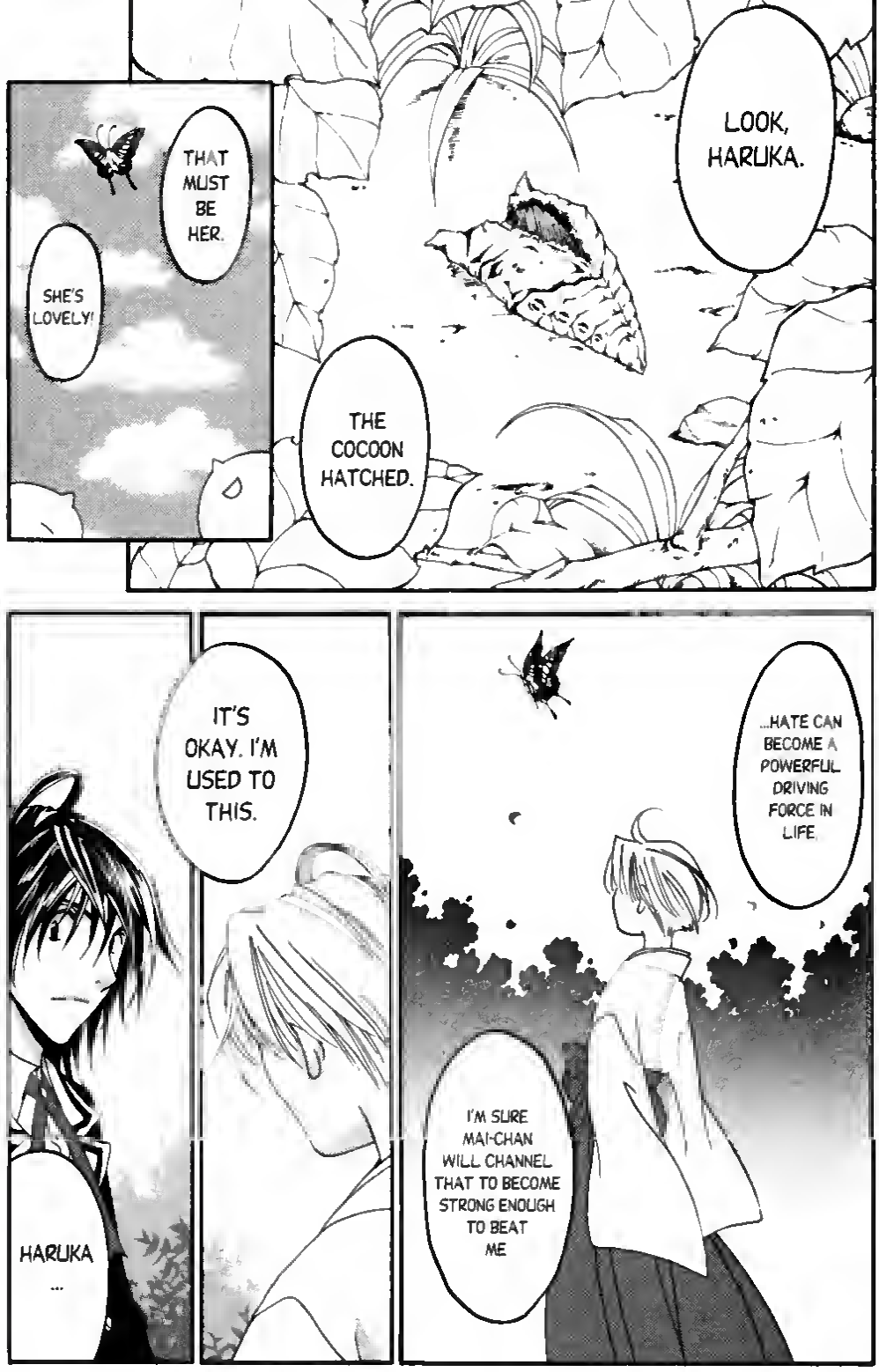
K-KANTAROU-SAN... THANK YOU.
AND HARUKA-SAN...

I'M SO HAPPY.

I'M SO GLAD...
...I GOT TO MEET YOU.
MIYABI!
MIYABI!
I...

I'LL NEVER STOP HATING YOU!
NOT UNTIL THE DAY I DIE, KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA!
...WE'RE DONE HERE. WE'LL LEAVE IN THE MORNING, HARUKA.
.....
WE'RE JUST GOING TO COLLECT OUR PAYMENT AND LEAVE!
IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS THAT MAI-CHAN DOESN'T WANT US HERE.

OH, YEAH. I WANTED TO ASK YOU.
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL HER? THE FACT THAT BECAUSE YOU'VE SINNED, YOU CAN'T INVOKE TAIZANFUKUN...


LOOK, HARUKA.
THE COCOON HATCHED.
THAT MUST BE HER.
SHE'S LOVELY!
...HATE CAN BECOME A POWERFUL DRIVING FORCE IN LIFE.
I'M SURE MAI-CHAN WILL CHANNEL THAT TO BECOME STRONG ENOUGH TO BEAT ME
IT'S OKAY. I'M USED TO THIS.
HARUKA ...

BE SURE TO REMEMBER...
...MIYABI-CHAN ON THIS EARTH.
.....

...RIGHT.

THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN A GIRL DIE WITH A HAPPY SMILE ON HER FACE.
I CAN'T FORGET THAT.
!
THE WEATHER'S STARTING TO ACT UP.
LET'S HURRY, HARUKA.
RUSTLE

THIS FEELS LIKE...
...A PREMONITION.

WE SUFFER FROM MISFORTUNE...
PLEASE COME AND SAVE US.
BECAUSE OF THE FUTILITY OF HUMAN AID...
...WE WORK VALIANTLY FOR GOD.
GOD IS THE ONE WHO WILL
DESTROY THOSE AGAINST US.

CHAPTER 8

Demon Eater, I'm blinded by your radiance!
Look. When you hold it up against the light like this, isn't it magnificently beautiful?
キラ
キラ

tactics 3

MWU HA HA HA HA!
HARUKA LOST!
AND YOU KNOW WHAT *THAT* MEANS!
OFF WITH YOUR CLOTHES, BIG BOY!
LET'S SEE THAT--
HA!
HA!

TAKE IT FROM THE POSTER CHILD OF KANDA'S GEISHAS.
THE MARK OF A PROFESSIONAL IS REALIZING WHAT *NOT* TO SHOW.
TAKE CARE WITH WHAT YOU BARE HARUKA-KUN.
DAMMIT
I WAS A SINGLE CARD AWAY FROM WINNING THAT TIME
I CAUGHT THE TIGER! HA!
Enyakora, What I caught was a tiger, tiger, tiger, tiger, tiiiiger.
YAKKO-CHAN NEVER CHANGES. SHE WAITS TO THE 11TH HOUR TO REALLY START KICKING ASS.
SLUUUURP

tactics 3

FABULOUS! TAKE IT OFF, HARUKA!
I'M GOING HOME!
kya!
kya!
NOW, NOW.
TIGER
FIST
Hunter
Hunter's Mother
Tiger
HARUKA'S THE TIGER AND YAKKO-CHAN'S THE HUNTER. IT'S LIKE IN "ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS."
HARUKA-KUN LOST AGAIN!
Whee!
ガーン
Hunter
Tiger
YES, SIR.
I've been spared.
HA HA! LET ME POUR FOR YOU, NUMATA-SENSEI.
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH, YAKKO.
LET THESE BOYS RELAX AND DRINK UP.

PLEASE, NUMATA-SENSEI. I'M COMPLETELY INDEBTED TO YOU.
ISN'T THIS SOMETHING, NUMATA-SENSEI!? I DON'T THINK YOU'VE CALLED IN KANTAROU SINCE HE WAS A STUDENT
FORGIVE AN OLD, RETIRED MAN FOR NOT KEEPING UP WITH YOU.
sip
ANYWAY, SENSEI. WHAT'S THE REASON FOR TODAY'S CELEBRA-TION?
HUNH SO THIS OLD GUY IS KANTAROU'S TEACHER?
AND THE TOP FOLKLORE RESEARCHER IN THE ACADEMIC WORLD DOESN'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE
AH. HERE HE IS THE MAN IN CHARGE
SORRY I'M LATE EVERYONE

HASUMI!!
IN CHARGE ...?
HELLO, NUMATA-SENSEI.
YOU SEEM TO BE DOING WELL.
THESE ARE FOR YOU, YAKKO-SAN
WHY, THANK YOU, HASUMI-SAN! HOW NICE TO MEET *SOMEONE* WHO KNOWS HOW TO TREAT A LADY.
OH, YUCK. I DON'T THINK THERE'S ENOUGH ROOM IN HERE...
...FOR THAT PRICK *AND* HIS EGO.

I'LL BE DAMNED. ICHINOMIYA'S ALIVE AND KICKING.
STILL SCRIBBLING OUT THIRD RATE FANTASY NOVELS THAT NO ONE BOTHERS TO READ?

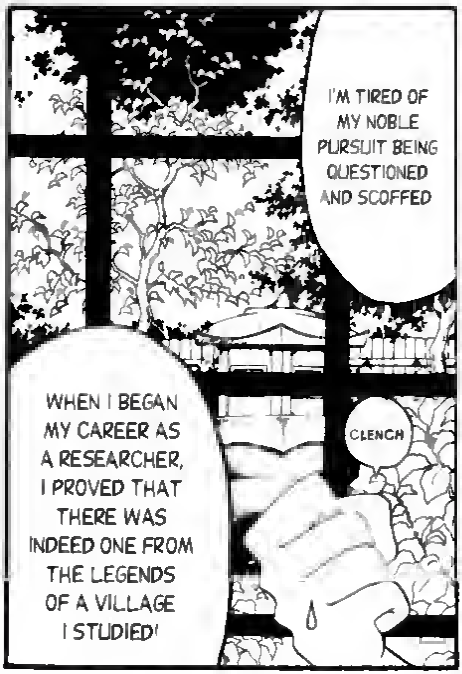
I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW THEY *DO* SELL, THANK YOU!
THEY REALLY DON'T
AND THEY'RE NOT ILLUSIONARY, OR FANTASY, OR PSYCHIC, OR PORNOGRAPHIC, OR WHATEVER FAULTY LABEL YOU WANT TO ASSIGN TO THEM, EITHER!

HEY, YAKKO. WHO IS THIS GUY?
HASUMI-SAN STUDIED UNDER NUMATA-SENSEI, TOO. HE WAS A CLASSMATE OF KANTAROU'S.
HE'S A SUCCESSFUL, ELITE FOLKLORE RESEARCHER AND RELIGIOUS SCHOLAR. IN OTHER WORDS, NOTHING LIKE KANTAROU.
HE SELLS MORE BOOKS
LET ME GUESS

THAT KANTAROU. EVER SINCE HE WAS IN COLLEGE, HE WAS ALWAYS SKIPPING SCHOOL TO "EXTERMINATE YOUKAI" OR WHATEVER.
OOPS, I'VE GOTTA REPEAT THE YEAR AGAIN! SUCH IS LIFE.
I HEARD HIS GRADES WERE GOOD, BUT HE GRADUATED LONG AFTER HIS UNDERCLASSMAN HASUMI-SAN.
...WHY AREN'T YOU ANSWERING, YAKKO?
UNDER CLASSMAN? HOW OLD DOES THAT MAKE KANTAROU?

HARUKA IS MY LOVELY ASSISTANT.
Ahem!
HE'S AIDING ME IN MY FOLKLORE RESEARCH ON YOUKAI.
YAKKO-SAN, WHO'S THE NEW GENTLEMAN?
Hmm...
AH, I WAS STUDYING ABROAD IN ENGLAND UNTIL JUST THE OTHER DAY.
ABROAD?! ARGH!
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?!
Kteeee!!
YOUKAI RESEARCH?
Pffft
MY, MY...HASUMI AND KANTAROU HAVEN'T GROWN OUT OF THEIR CONSTANT QUARRELS.
FORGIVE ME, SENSEI QUARRELING IN FRONT OF YOU IS RUDE
BY THE WAY, HASUMI WHY HAVEN'T YOU SHOWN UP FOR THE ACADEMIC MEETINGS AS OF LATE?
AND YOU'RE JUVENILE! DON'T FORGET JUVENILE!

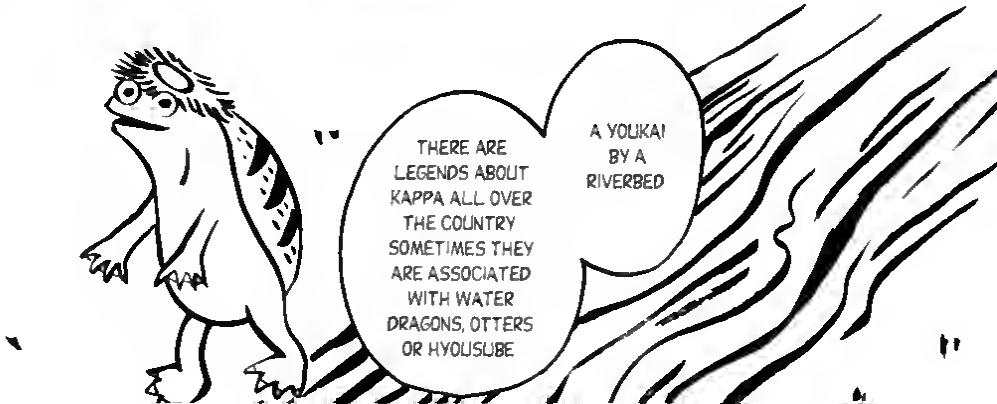
LISTEN CAREFULLY, BOTH OF YOU. THE REASON I'VE CALLED YOU HERE IS BECAUSE I WANT YOU TO FIND SOMETHING.
A KAPPA'S...
...BAMBOO LADLE?
UM, EXCUSE ME?
ARE YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT GOING SENILE?
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF IT, EITHER.
NOT TO BE RUDE, SENSEI, BUT I'VE NEVER READ ANYTHING LIKE THAT IN MY STUDIES.
Hmm...
THERE ARE KAPPA WHO CARRY THOSE THINGS.?

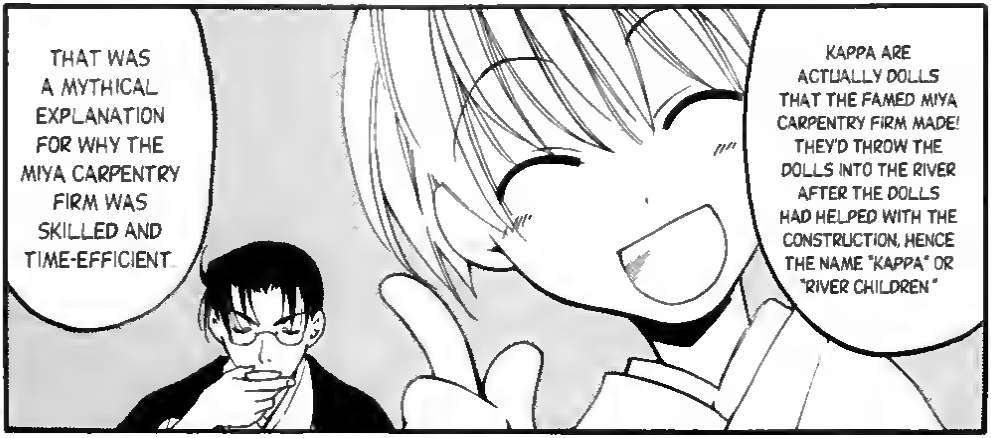

I'M TIRED OF MY NOBLE PURSUIT BEING QUESTIONED AND SCOFFED
CLENCH
WHEN I BEGAN MY CAREER AS A RESEARCHER, I PROVED THAT THERE WAS INDEED ONE FROM THE LEGENDS OF A VILLAGE I STUDIED!

MY MIND IS CLEAR AS CRYSTAL!

I'VE FORGOTTEN THE MOST ESSENTIAL CLUE.
INDEED ..WHAT VILLAGE WAS IT AGAIN?
HE'S LOSING IT, ALL RIGHT.

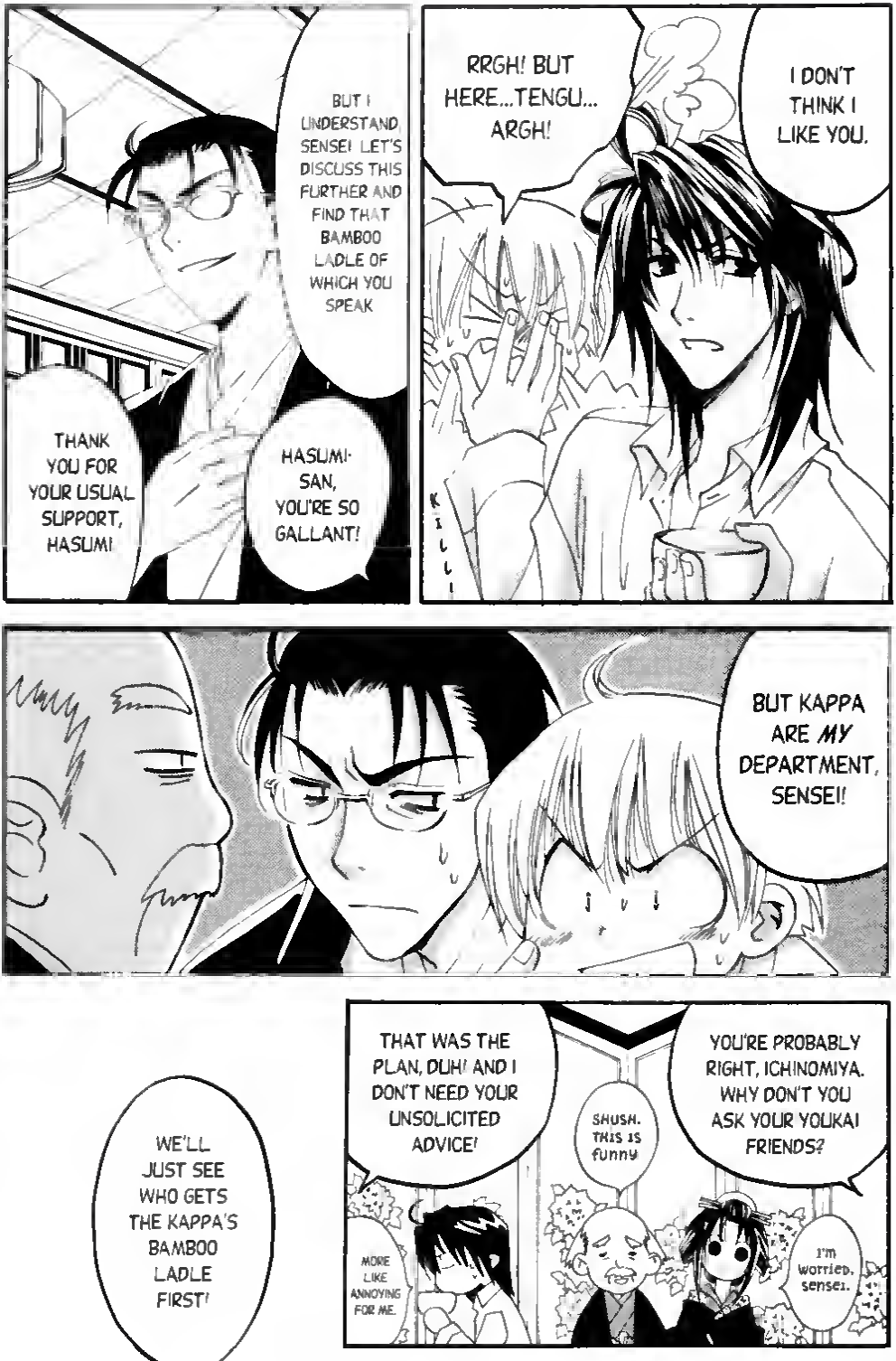
SENSEI, WHAT VILLAGE WAS THAT?
WHO'S QUESTIONING AND SCOFFING?


A YOUKAI BY A RIVERBED
THERE ARE LEGENDS ABOUT KAPPA ALL OVER THE COUNTRY SOMETIMES THEY ARE ASSOCIATED WITH WATER DRAGONS, OTTERS OR HYOUSUBE


THAT WAS A MYTHICAL EXPLANATION FOR WHY THE MIYA CARPENTRY FIRM WAS SKILLED AND TIME-EFFICIENT.
KAPPA ARE ACTUALLY DOLLS THAT THE FAMED MIYA CARPENTRY FIRM MADE! THEY'D THROW THE DOLLS INTO THE RIVER AFTER THE DOLLS HAD HELPED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION, HENCE THE NAME "KAPPA" OR "RIVER CHILDREN."

THAT'S A METAPHOR FOR THE TRADE AND INTERMINGLING THAT HAPPENED WITH IMMIGRANTS FROM THE ASIAN MAINLAND. IT WAS COMMON PRACTICE TO MAKE FOREIGNERS OUT TO BE YOUKAI.
IN KYUSHU, THERE WAS A MILITARY COMMANDER WHO HAD A RELATIONSHIP WITH A FAMILY OF KAPPA! HE--

AN AWFUL, OUTDATED, NARROW-MINDED TRADITION.
THE TIDY LABELING OF THOSE WITH DIFFERENT VALUES AS "YOUKAI" OR FRIGHTENING NATURAL PHENOMENA AS WORKS OF "KAMI" OR "THE DIVINE" IS A TRADITION OF JAPAN
ど
ん


BUT I UNDERSTAND, SENSEI! LET'S DISCUSS THIS FURTHER AND FIND THAT BAMBOO LADLE OF WHICH YOU SPEAK
THANK YOU FOR YOUR USUAL SUPPORT, HASUMI
HASUMI-SAN, YOU'RE SO GALLANT!
RRGH! BUT HERE...TENGU... ARGH!
I DON'T THINK I LIKE YOU.
KILL!
BUT KAPPA ARE MY DEPARTMENT, SENSEI!
THAT WAS THE PLAN, DUH! AND I DON'T NEED YOUR UNSOLICITED ADVICE!
SHUSH. THIS IS funny
YOU'RE PROBABLY RIGHT, ICHINOMIYA. WHY DON'T YOU ASK YOUR YOUKAI FRIENDS?
MORE LIKE ANNOYING FOR ME.
I'm worried, sensei.
WE'LL JUST SEE WHO GETS THE KAPPA'S BAMBOO LADLE FIRST!

BRING
IT!

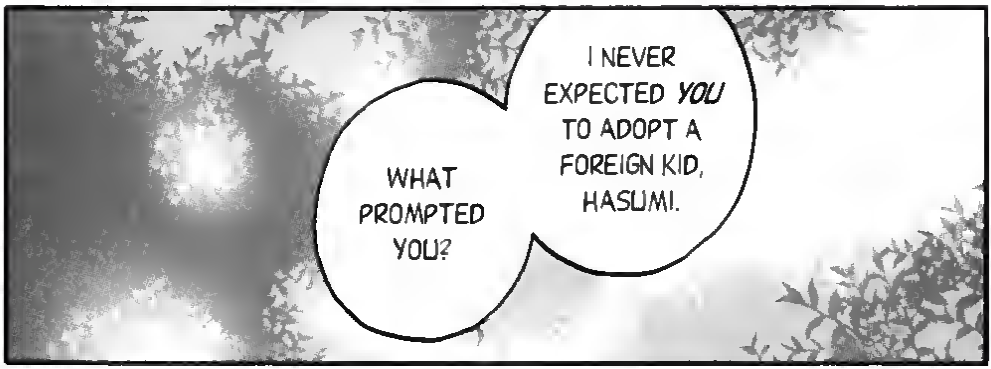
HEY. HASUMI.
THANK YOU, BOYS.
COUNT ON US, SENSEI.
CAN I INTEREST YOU IN A LITTLE *BET* ON THIS MATCH?
IF I WIN, I WANT A PIECE OF YOUR RESEARCH.
WHAT DO YOU WANT IF *YOU* WIN, HASUMI?
FINE BY ME.

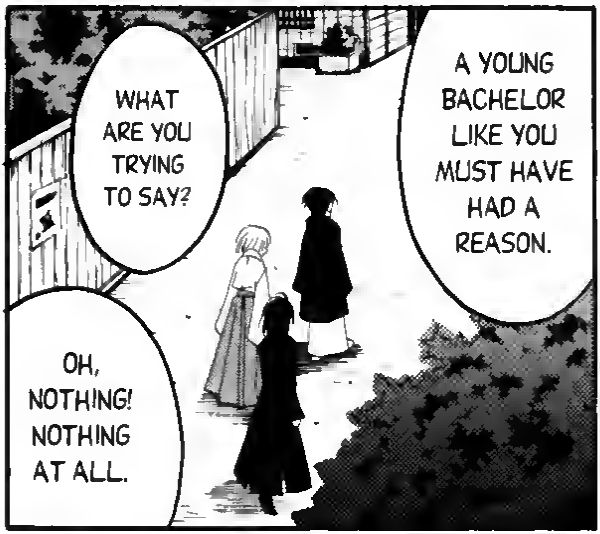
.....
WAH? BORING.
got from Yakko-chan
YOU PAY BACK THAT DEBT YOU OWE ME.
Banzai!
HUZZAH! THAT ASSHOLE'S RESEARCH IS MY TICKET INTO THE FOLKLORE ACADEMIC CIRCLES!
YOU'RE VERY PETTY.

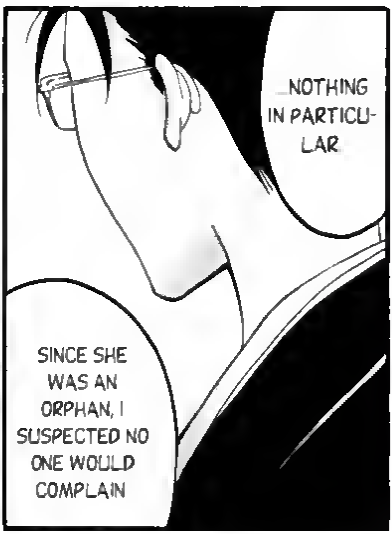
HELLO, ROSALIE-CHAN.
THIS CUTIE'S MINE TODAY RIGHT, KAN-CHAN?
YEAH.
ROSALIE-CHAN.
.....
I'M YOUKO. NICE TO MEET YOU.
HARUKA.
?
?
WE'RE LEAV-ING.

ROSALIE!
YEAH, AND THANKS FOR TAKING CARE OF HER. ROSALIE, SAY HELLO.
IS THIS THE GIRL YOU TALKED ABOUT ON THE PHONE THIS MORNING?
OH HEY, PRICK-FACE.
YOU
...

HELLO?
MORNING, HARUKA-KUN
LET'S PUT IN ALL OUR EFFORTS AND DO OUR BEST TODAY
HARUKA-CHAAAN!
WE'VE GOT A GUEST... COULD YOU GET THAT?
ROSALIE, THIS IS THE HOUSEHOLD THAT WILL BE TAKING CARE OF YOU TODAY
COME ON OUT!


I NEVER EXPECTED *YOU* TO ADOPT A FOREIGN KID, HASUMI.
WHAT PROMPTED YOU?


A YOUNG BACHELOR LIKE YOU MUST HAVE HAD A REASON.
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
OH, NOTHING! NOTHING AT ALL.


...NOTHING IN PARTICULAR.
SINCE SHE WAS AN ORPHAN, I SUSPECTED NO ONE WOULD COMPLAIN

A-ANYWAY, I HAVE A BAMBOO LADLE TO LOOK FOR. THIS IDLE GOSSIP IS WASTING TIME!
WHAT AN AWFUL PERSON YOU ARE.

AH.
HUNH

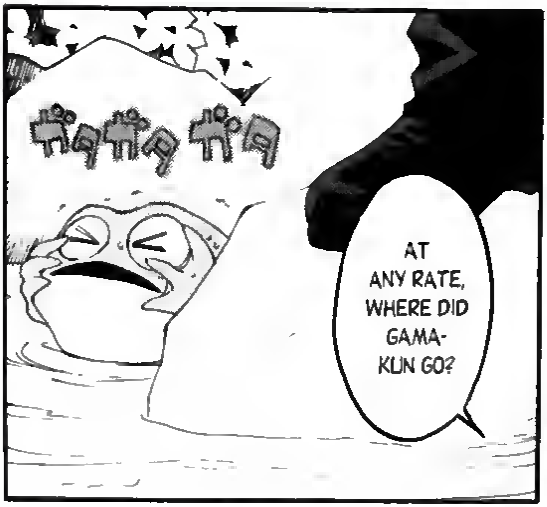
YAKKO-SAN ISN'T THAT CLOSED-MINDED!
I WAS JUST WONDERING IF YAKKO-CHAN'S TURNED OFF BY *YOUNG DADDIES.*

I'VE MET HER BEFORE.
HMM...
HEY KANTAROU
WHAT'S YOUR OPINION ON THE ROSALIE GIRL?
INTERESTING, HARUKA.
I THINK YOU AND I HAVE DISCOVERED THE SAME THING.
THAT LITTLE GIRL...
...ISN'T QUITE "NORMAL."

I'LL TRY ASKING THE YOUKAI.
NOW LET'S TAKE HASUMI'S PAINFULLY OBVIOUS ADVICE, SHALL WE?
THAT'S ODD HE WON'T COME OUT.
HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE FRIENDS WITH THE YOUKAI HERE..
HEEEY! GAMA-KUUUUN!
THAT HASUMI GUY MENTIONED A BAMBOO LADLE.
WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT ABOUT A BAMBOO LADLE?

IT'S ALSO SAID THAT IF YOU EAT FROM A BAMBOO LADLE RECEIVED FROM A SHRINE, MIRACLES CAN HAPPEN
GOOD FORTUNE LONGEVITY... THAT KIND OF THING

SINCE LONG AGO, THE CENTER HOLLOW OF A BAMBOO LADLE HAS BEEN SAID TO HOUSE GODS
THERE ARE PLENTY OF PLACES WHERE THEY'RE TALISMANS IN SHRINES.


AT ANY RATE, WHERE DID GAMA-KUN GO?

IT'S THE SORT OF MAGICAL TALISMAN ANY HOUSEHOLD WOULD HAVE

KANTAROU--THIS THE GUY?
WAAH! IT'S YOU!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WH-WHAT? I'M HIDING! I CAN FEEL THE AURA OF THE DEMON-EATING TENGU NEARBY!

HUH?
A KAPPA WITH A BAMBOO LADLE?

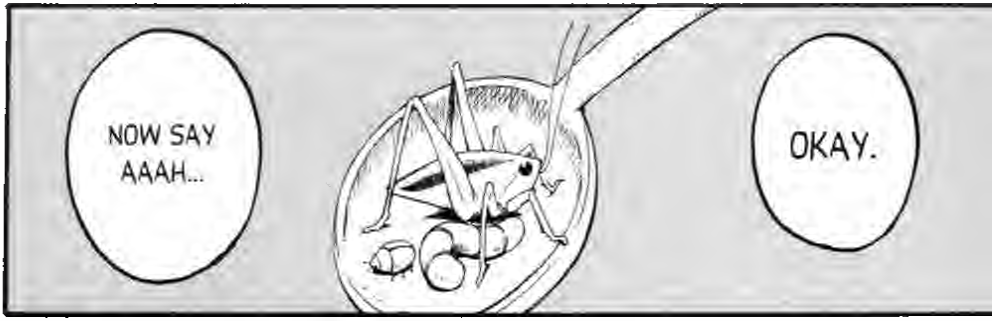
YEAH HAVE YOU HEARD OF ONE?
HMM. I'VE BEEN LIVING IN THIS RIVER FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, BUT THIS IS THE FIRST I'VE HEARD OF THAT.

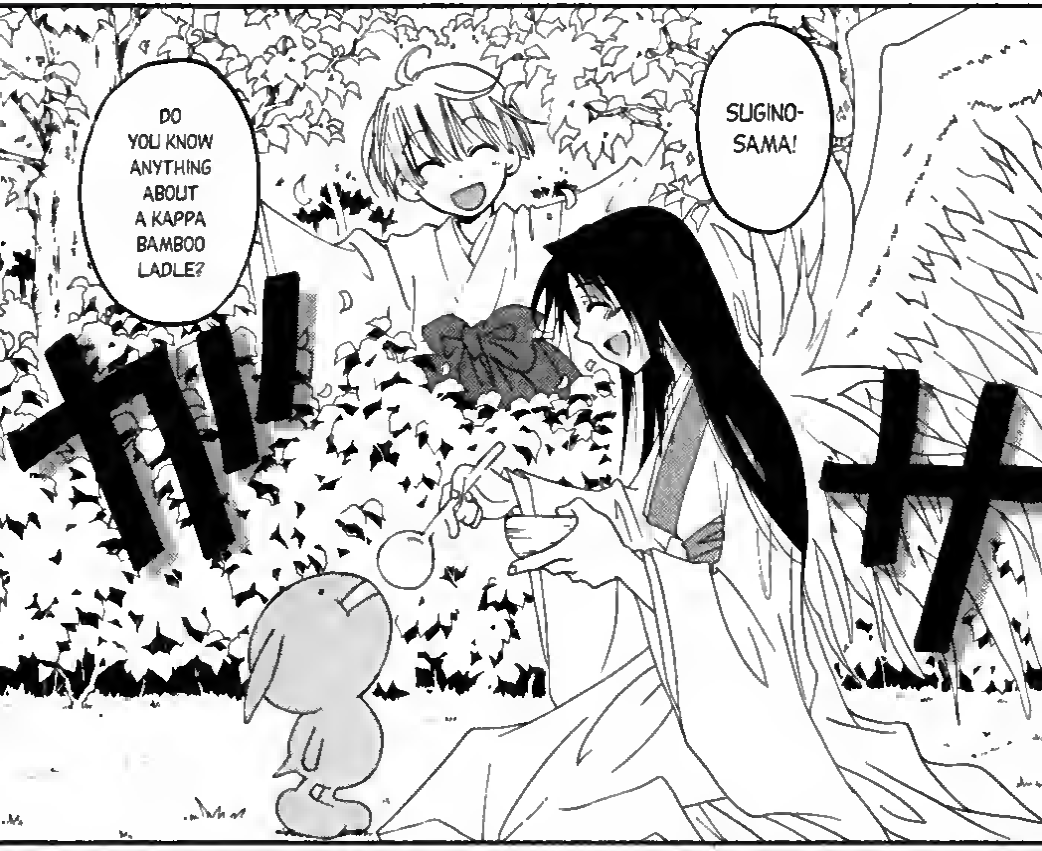
HEY! LONG TIME NO SEE, GAMA KUN!
KAN-CHAN!

YOU'RE RIGHT!
WAIT A MINUTE! THERE ARE THOSE GUYS WHO COME BY EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.
I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THEM, BUT...
I'M SORRY I'M NOT MUCH HELP.
sniffle
WOW. IF YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF IT, I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE IT EXISTS
.....
HARUKA WE'RE GOING!
THANKS, GAMA-KUN.
HE'S SO COOL!
KAN-CHAN GOT THE DEMON-EATING TENGU TO BE HIS HENCHMAN.
A MOUNTAIN?

HASUMI.
SO YOU'VE FINALLY BEGUN FOCUSING ON THE LADLE ITSELF, EH?
KAPPA LIVE IN RIVERS AND THE OCEAN RIGHT? SO WHY ARE WE GOING TO A MOUNTAIN?
THE BAMBOO LADLE WAS ORIGINALLY CRAFTED BY WOOD-WORKERS IN THE MOUNTAINS.
THAT'S BECAUSE—
YOU'RE RIGHT IN THAT, BUT...
IT'S WHY THE LADLE WAS CONSIDERED A SACRED OBJECT. IN OTHER WORDS THE BAMBOO LADLE OF THE KAPPA WAS GRANTED BY THE MOUNTAIN
THE VILLAGE PEOPLE BELIEVED THERE WERE GODS IN THE MOUNTAINS--THE LADLE WAS A USEFUL TOOL BESTOWED UPON THEM BY THOSE GODS

A YOUKAI CALLED A YAMAWARO DESCENDS FROM THE MOUNTAIN IN THE SPRINGTIME AND BECOMES A KAPPA IN THE RIVERS.
AT THE EQUINOCTIAL WEEK IN AUTUMN, HE RETURNS HOME TO THE MOUNTAINS AND REVERTS TO BEING A YAMAWARO.
THE BASIS OF INVESTIGATING FOLKLORE IS ASKING INHABITANTS IN NOTED LOCALES ABOUT THEIR PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE PERTAINING TO THE OBJECT OF STUDY.
YOU'RE NOT EVEN WORKING FROM THAT BASIS, ICHINOMIYA.
YOU TOLD ME TO ASK YOUKAI ABOUT YOUKAI.
YOU THINK THAT'S THE QUICKEST AND EASIEST WAY TO GO ABOUT THIS, HM?
OF COURSE I AM.
I'M JUST NOT ASKING "HUMAN" INHABITANTS.
DO WHAT YOU WANT.
I'M GOING TO LOOK FOR THE PLACE WHERE THE KAPPA'S BAMBOO LADLE IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN BESTOWED
NNGH! THAT DOES IT-- HARUKA, OUT WITH YOUR WINGS!
SIGH.


NOW SAY AAAH...
OKAY.

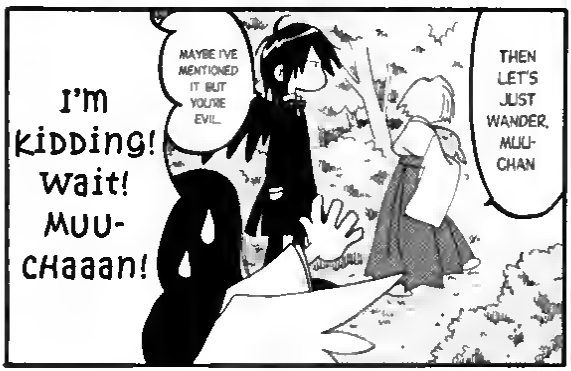

DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT A KAPPA BAMBOO LADLE?
SUGINO-SAMA!

It's Kantarou! NOOOOOO!

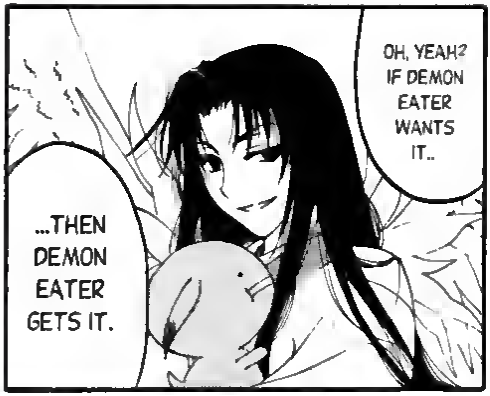
A KAPPA WITH A LADLE?
SURE, I KNOW ONE.

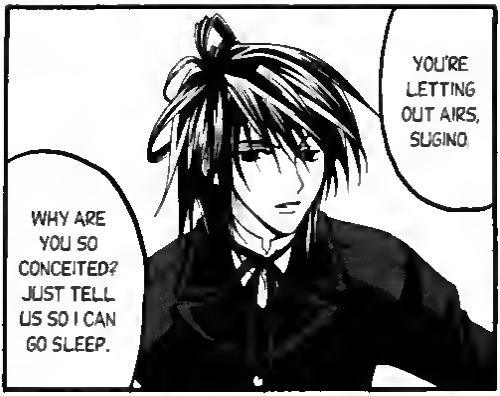
Hmph!
WHICH MOUNTAIN IS HE ON?

I HATE YOU SO MUCH!
I EXPECT NOTHING LESS OF MY BELOVED SUGINO-SAMA!


I'm kidding! Wait! MUU-CHaaan!
MAYBE I'VE MENTIONED IT BUT YOU'RE EVIL.
THEN LET'S JUST WANDER, MUU-CHAN

LETS TRY THIS AGAIN SUGINO-SAMA. WHICH MOUNTAIN?
.....


OH, YEAH? IF DEMON EATER WANTS IT..
...THEN DEMON EATER GETS IT.

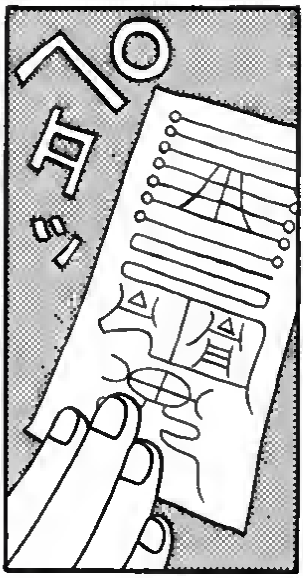

YOU'RE LETTING OUT AIRS, SUGINO.
WHY ARE YOU SO CONCEITED? JUST TELL US SO I CAN GO SLEEP.

IT'S AT TAIHOU MOUNTAIN.
HAVE FUN.

I THINK I LEFT THE STOVE ON AT HOME KANTAROU
HARUKA.
FLY ME TO TAIHOU MOUNTAIN.
...KANTAROU, I'M BEGGING YOU...
PLEASE LET ME GO HOME AFTER I DROP YOU OFF
WHAT? WHY? WHAT'S SO BAD ABOUT TAIHOU MOUNTAIN?
I JUST... DON'T LIKE IT, THAT'S ALL!
WELL, I DON'T CARE! YOU'RE BRINGING ME, SO CAN IT!

NOW, TIME TO FIND ME AN ELUSIVE CREATURE OF MYTH!
LET ME GOOOO, LET ME GOOOO...
Ching
HUH?
ドゴ!!
WHO'S THAT?
HARUKA?

DEMON EATER! YOU CAME TO SEEEEE MEEEE!
AAAUGH!
NOOO!
DO SOMETHING, KANTAROU!
SMOOOOOCH!
LOVE ME AND BE LOVED!
.....
I ALREADY TOLD YOU I'M NOT INTERESTED!
I'M SO HAPPY! OH PLEASE LET'S GET MARRIED! LET'S GET MARRIED THIS INSTANT!
NOW LET GO! OW!
LIFE OF MATRIMONY!
YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY EXPECT ME TO INSULT YOUR FIANCÉE, HARUKA.
BY WHAT STRETCH OF THE IMAGINATION DO I LOOK LIKE I WANT TO BE HERE?!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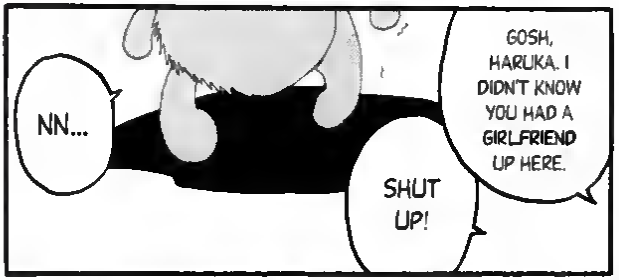
WE ARE NOT IN LOVE!
AND YOU PROPOSED I REMEMBER
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CRUEL WHEN WE'RE SO DEEPLY IN LOVE?!
YAAAAH!
AND I PROPOSED NOTHING!
YAAAAH!


NN...
GOSH, HARUKA. I DIDN'T KNOW YOU HAD A GIRLFRIEND UP HERE.
SHUT UP!

SORRY, YAMABIKO-CHAN WE HAVE VERY IMPORTANT WORK TO DO RIGHT NOW
BE A GOOD GIRL AND STAY PUT.

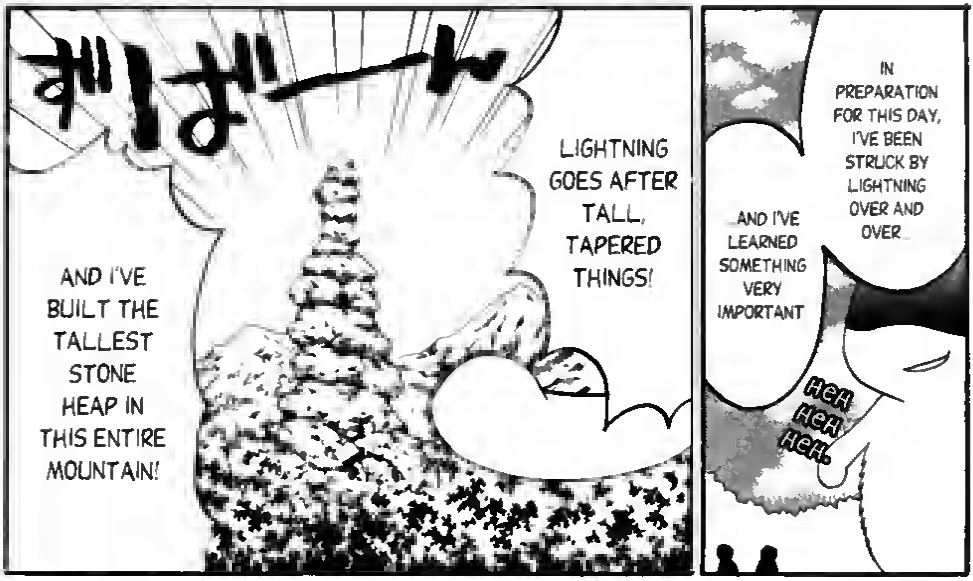
DON'T LEAVE ME!
DEMON EATER!

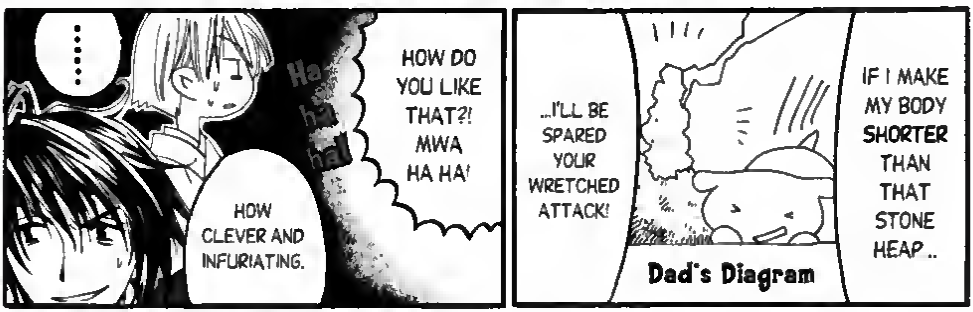
HUH?
DEMON EATER!
DO YOU UNDER-STAND THE NOT FUNNY?
EEEK!

THIS IS THE 100TH YEAR SINCE YOU MET MY DAUGHTER!
BE A MAN AND MARRY THE GIRL!
short

ゴゴゴゴゴゴ
YIKES!
HE'S THAT YOUKAI'S FATHER
WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT?!
HE THINKS MY MARRYING HIS DAUGHTER WILL INCREASE HIS POPULARITY THE WHOLE THING IS ASININE
I'VE HAD IT
I WON'T TOLERATE STUBBORNNESS...

HARUKA, BE CAREFUL! YOU DON'T WANT TO KILL THEM!
IT WON'T-- BELIEVE ME
ゴゴゴ
...EVEN WHEN IT'S A GENETIC TRAIT!
のっしょ
MWU HA HA... IT'S NO USE.
WHAT?!
OIO YOU THINK I WAS LOUNGING AROUND ALL THOSE YEARS YOU WERE SEALED?
I STUDIED LIGHTNING IN ORDER TO STICK IT TO YOU!


AND I'VE BUILT THE TALLEST STONE HEAP IN THIS ENTIRE MOUNTAIN!
LIGHTNING GOES AFTER TALL, TAPERED THINGS!
IN PREPARATION FOR THIS DAY, I'VE BEEN STRUCK BY LIGHTNING OVER AND OVER...
...AND I'VE LEARNED SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT
HEH HEH HEH.


HOW DO YOU LIKE THAT?! MWA HA HA!
HOW CLEVER AND INFURIATING.
...I'LL BE SPARED YOUR WRETCHED ATTACK!
Dad's Diagram
IF I MAKE MY BODY SHORTER THAN THAT STONE HEAP..

HEY, HARUKA...
!
WE NEED TO STOP THAT YOUKAI.
MY NOBLE QUEST OF BEATING HASUMI'S ASS DEPENDS ON IT.

OW!
NOW SHUT UP AND GET MARRIED LIKE A GOOD LITTLE—
YOU CAN RUN BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE!
BUT THEY ARE... STILL... ANNOYING.
QUIT IT!
YOUR LITTLE TRICKS AREN'T ENOUGH TO STOP ME!
YOU!

I DON'T HAVE TIME TO WASTE ON YOU, HUMAN.
MY BUSINESS IS WITH...
...MY FUTURE SON-IN-LOW!
NOW, HARUKA!

GNYAAAAH!

STUDY HARDER
THE ELECTRICITY OF LIGHTNING RUNS MORE OVER THE SURFACE OF THE OBJECT THAN THROUGH THE CENTER
WHY...?
WHY...?
IF LIGHTNING STRIKES A CONDUCTOR, BE SURE TO STAY AT LEAST TWO METERS AWAY FROM IT.
THAT'S YOUR LESSON FOR TODAY. ♡
HARUKA'S NOT INTERESTED, SO DROP IT.
THE BOTH OF YOU.
YOU NEED HEALTHY, RESPONSIBLE, TWO-SIDED LOVE.
ALSO, MARRIAGES VIA DEATH THREAT NEVER WORK OUT.

YOU'RE A COLD-HEARTED LITTLE MONSTER
HARUKA, JUST MARRY HER.
AW... NOW I FEEL BAD.
sniffle
NOOOO!
I DON'T WANNA!
OH, LOOK. ONE OF THE OEMON-EATING TENGU'S FEATHERS!
!
.....
I-I HAVE NO IDEA!
DON'T SAY IT, DEAR!
UH...
BY THE WAY DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE KAPPA WITH THE LADLE IS?
I'LL BET YOU WANT THIS.
Yikes.
OIO YOU KNOW THAT IF YOU CALL TO THIS ITEM, THE OEMON-EATING TENGU WILL FLY TO YOU NO MATTER WHERE HE MAY BE?

TEE HEE'
♡
DADDY NOW I CAN SUMMON DEMON EATER ANYTIME I WANT!
♡
YOU WERE SCAMMED, SWEET-HEART
HERE WE ARE. THIS SHOULD BE WHERE THE KAPPA LIVES.
RUSTLE
NOW ALL WE HAVE TO--
NO.
I FEEL AWFUL ABOUT LYING TO YAMABIKO-CHAN. GO SEE HER ONCE IN A WHILE, HARUKA

WELL, WELL. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, HASUMI.
ARE YOU READY TO SEE THE KAPPA?
ICHINO-MIYA?
どぴゅっ
GAH!
SHUT UP! THIS PLACE IS JUST WHERE THE KAPPA LEGEND REMAINS AND WHERE HIS LADLE IS REVERED.
JUST GO.
I can't watch this.
I TOLD YOU, THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A KAPPA!
どどどっ
THE BAMBOO-LADLE KAPPA DOES TOO LIVE HERE!
HUH?
どぴゅっ
KAPPA!
BAMBOO LADLE!
AH.
KAPPA!
BAMBOO LADLE!

WHO THE HECK RE YOU?
HEY, YOU GUUUUYS.

YOU WANNA TAKE MY LADLE, DO YA?
GAWRSH, I FEEL ALL FAMOUS.
I'VE GOT A TON, SO GO ON AND TAKE ONE
どっさり
I LOVE THE MOUNTAINS, BUT I'LL DIE IF I DON'T KEEP WATER IN MY BOWL.
SO I WALK AROUND AND WATER IT LIKE THIS SEE?
ぱしゃ
IF YOU EVER WANT ANOTHER BAMBOO LADLE, JUST COME ON BY.
SEE YA.
ピクッ
OH, HA-SU-MI! ♡

I AM INFINITELY PLEASED...
...THAT I GOT TO ADD TO YOUR EDUCATION. ♡
YOU REALLY CAME BACK WITH THE KAPPA'S BAMBOO LADLE, EH? I EXPECTED NOTHING LESS FROM MY FINEST APPRENTICE!

TO BE HONEST, I UNDERSTAND HASUMI'S REALISTIC APPROACH TO THE YOUKAI OF FOLKLORE STUDIES.
BUT WHEN I THINK OF THE POSSIBILITY OF ACTUAL YOUKAI EXISTING, I GET EXCITED AND BURY MYSELF IN LITERATURE AND INVESTIGATION.
I WISH I COULD HAVE SEEN THE KAPPA, TOO.
KAN-CHAN, WE HAVE A VISITOR.
WHO?
OH, THAT WOULD BE MINE I CALLED SOMEONE TO SHOW HIM THIS.
NUMATA-SENSEI, I HEARD YOU'D SEEN THE KAPPA'S BAMBOO LADLE, SO I GOT HERE AS FAST AS I COULD!
HUH?
I KNOW YOU.

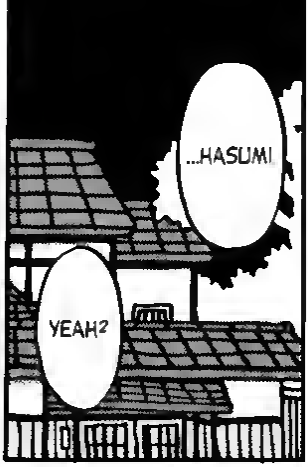
FATHER EDWARDS!
HELLO.
KANTAROU-SAN, IT'S BEEN SO LONG!
ARE YOU GREETING ME OR MY PANTS?
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU KNEW MY OLD TEACHER, FATHER EDWARDS.
ICHINOMIYA, WHO IS THIS FELLOW?
FATHER EDWARDS IS AN EXORCIST FROM THE ANGLICAN CHURCH. HE'S ALSO THE SUPERVISOR IN CHARGE OF KEEPING JAPANESE CHRISTIANITY IN LINE.
I OWE NUMATA-SENSEI A LOT. HE'S TAUGHT ME SO MUCH ABOUT JAPAN.
LEARNING ABOUT THIS LAND IS MY JOB.

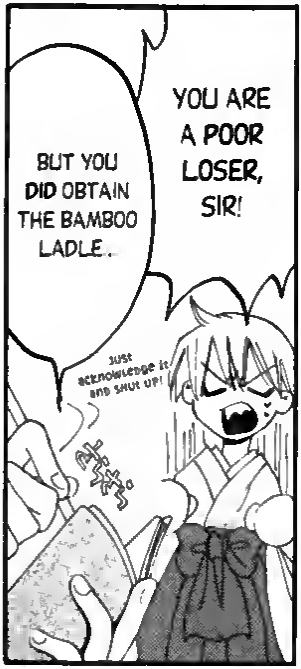
SO THIS IS THE BAMBOO LADLE OF THE KAPPA! I HEARD THAT THE LADLE HAS THE POWER TO SUMMON SPIRITS THROUGH IT.
BUT THE SPIRITUAL POWER OF THIS ONE IS RATHER WEAK.
AN ANGLICAN EXORCIST?
I'M SORRY FOR DOUBTING YOU, SIR.
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW THAT YOU'RE PROSTRATED. HA HA HA!
BUT HOW KNOWLEDGE-ABLE, FATHER.
He said it was just for pouring water.
THAT'S BECAUSE IT WAS KEPT BY THE KAPPA FOR PRIVATE USE.
ROSALIE-CHAN'S DISAPPEARED. SHE WAS PLAYING BY HERSELF HERE A MINUTE AGO!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, YOUKO-CHAN?
.....
WHERE COULD SHE HAVE GONE...?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
!
.....

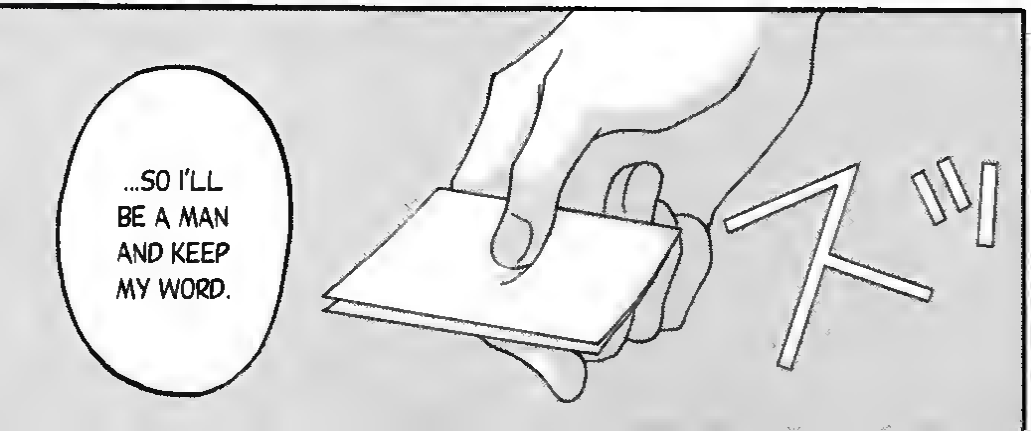
tactics 3

TIME TO PAY THE PIPER!
I WON THE BET.


...HASUMI
YEAH?


YOU ARE A POOR LOSER, SIR!
BUT YOU DID OBTAIN THE BAMBOO LADLE.
JUST acknowledge it and SHUT UP!

HMPH. I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF TRICK YOU PULLED...
...BUT I STILL WON'T ACKNOWLEDGE THAT YOUKAI EXIST.


...SO I'LL BE A MAN AND KEEP MY WORD.

I DID IT! HEE HEE. HIGHER ACADEMIC CIRCLES, HERE I COME!
WOO!
WHAT THE HELL?
.....
I'M A RESEARCHER WHO CAN'T SELL.
NOW NOBODY WILL EVER SAY...
THAT ASSHOLE CONNED ME!
I can't use this!
THIS IS A LINE! ONE MEASLY LINE!

ALTHOUGH IT DOES MAKE ME WONDER.
I'M AN EXORCIST FROM THE ANGLICAN CHURCH, AND...
There is no such thing as an exorcist in the Anglican Church.
WHO IS FATHER EDWARDS, EXACTLY?
I'M THE SUPERVISOR IN CHARGE OF KEEPING CHRISTIANITY ON TRACK IN JAPAN.

WHAT DO I THINK OF ROSALIE-CHAN? WELL...
SHE'S WELL BEHAVED AND ALL, BUT I GET THE FEELING THAT SHE'S SIZING ME UP SOMEHOW.
...RIGHT.
WHAT IS IT, KAN-CHAN?
AAAARGH!
THAT DIRTY PRIEST!
WHAT IS HE, STUPID?
THE HAKAMANIAC TURNS TO A LIFE OF CRIME
FATHER EDWARDS STOLE MY HAKAMA!

tactics Special 漫画版 Preview Comic

SIGH... I SHOULD DO MORE FOLKLORE RESEARCH THE WHOLE FAMILY CAN ENJOY
BUT UNLESS I TURN DOWN MORE CASES, I WON'T MAKE THE DEADLINE.
KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA.
AN UNSKILLED (UNMARKETABLE) FOLKLORE RESEARCHER.
NUTS.
AND WITH HIM...
I POURED YOU SOME TEA, MASTER!
WE'RE GOING TO EAT ACTUAL FOOD THIS MONTH!
I HAVE TO UP THE ANTE
IT PAINS ME.
SUCH IS THE CONFLICT OF THE PROFESSIONAL!

IT'S A NEW BLEND OF THAT ROASTED GREEN TEA YOU LIKE, KAN-CHAN. ♡
I BOUGHT THE MOST EXPENSIVE ONE JUST FOR YOU!
YOU MUST BE TIRED.
HOW ABOUT YOU TAKE A BREAK?

HARUKA
ALIAS: DEMON-EATING TENGU

YOUKO
ALIAS: DEMON FOX

AAGH!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, KAN-CHAN? WAS IT TOO HOT?!
YOU OKAY, KANTAROU?!
OH HO HO HO.
OH, PLEASE WE'RE ALWAYS SWEET AS PIE--IT'S ONLY NATURAL WE YOUKAI SHOW RESPECT TO THE ONE WHO NAMED US RIGHT, HARUKA-CHAN?
YES ESPECIALLY WHEN OUR MASTER IS EVEN BENEVOLENT OUTSIDE OF HIS ROLE AS OUR SLAVE DRIV-- UH, MASTER
THAT LEAVES ONLY ONE EXPLANATION FOR THIS.
AND THAT PAIN CAN ONLY MEAN... THIS ISN'T A DREAM!
MY BURNED TONGUE IS THROBBING
IT REALLY IS A NEW BLEND
IT'S NOT THE USUAL DILUTED POND WATER!

JOY!
YOU GUYS HAVE FINALLY REALIZED MY MAGNIFICENCE! TIME FOR A BIG GROUP HUG!

I LIKE DOGS...
OKAY, SO THIS ADORABLE LITTLE GUY WAS ABANDONED IN THE RAIN. WE CAN KEEP HIM, RIGHT?
LOOK HOW ATTACHED HE'S ALREADY GOTTEN TO HARUKA-CHAN!

...

NO, YOU MAY NOT KEEP HIM!

THAT WAS DANGEROUS BE CAREFUL
WHY NOT, KAN-CHAN?! AREN'T YOU BRIMMING WITH LOVE AND AFFECTION?!
NOT FOR SOME WATER-LOGGED FLEABAG!
GET RID OF IT! NOW!
Skreee!
KANTAROU... YOU'RE BEING MEANER THAN USUAL
DO YOU HATE DOGS OR SOME-THING?
THAT'S RIGHT! I HATE THEM MORE THAN ANYTHING ON EARTH!

GYAAAH!
GYAAAH!
YEW'RE AWONE, JUST WIKE ME. WET'S BE FWIENDS..
THEY RUINED MY CHILD-HOOD
STUPID KID.
don't come at me with your palm open.
DAT'S IT! I CAN'T TWUST ANYWONE!
OWIE! B-BUT YEW MUST BE A NICE PUPPY DEEP DOWN, WIGHT?
And that's why no dog will ever stay within my walls!

DON'T TOUCH ME.
I'LL CATCH YOUR CRUELTY.
...HUH?
NO, YOU DON'T. WHAT'S GOING ON?
WAIT! HARU--!
YIKES.
FINE— I KNOW TO QUIT WHEN I'M AHEAD

DO WHATEVER THE HELL YOU WANT!
FINE! I GET THE POINT!
And so the youkai and dog left.
EXCEL-LENT.
WE DID IT!
"MY HARUKA: THE LIFE OF A DEMON-EATING TENGU." YEAH, I COULD TRY THAT.
HMM.. MAYBE A MEMOIR-ESQUE NOVEL WILL SELL.
NOW, BACK TO WORK.

WHEN I FINALLY MET THE STRONGEST OF THE YOUKAI, THE DEMON-EATING TENGU, WHOM I'D BEEN LOOKING UP TO FOR SO MANY YEARS...
...I WAS ELATED FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART. IT WAS BEYOND ANYTHING I'D EVER IMAGINED.
WHEDDYA WANT?
YEEK!

HUH?
I WONDER IF HE REALLY THINKS OF YOU TWO AS FRIENDS.

EVEN NOW HE PROTECTS ME AND AIDS ME WITH MY SECONDARY JOB.
THE TWO OF US ARE VERY CLOSE FRIENDS.

KAN-CHAN!
I'M— DEFINITELY HEARING THINGS
What's he doing here, anyway?

I'M GOING TO WORK, SO BE SURE TO FEED THE DOG!
WHAT?!
DON'T GIVE ME THAT FACE. YOUKO MAMA HAS TO SUPPORT THE FAMILY, SINCE WE CAN'T EAT OFF YOUR MEASLY MANUSCRIPT INCOME!
GRRR!
She has a point. Maybe.
ANYWAY, WHERE'D HARUKA GO?
COME ON, FILTH-TRAP!
WHEN YOU'RE DONE EATING, GO FIND US SOME MONEY!
ちょい
ちょい
TIME FOR SOME DISCIPLINE!
DOG
KEH!

YOU'RE NOT YOURSELF TODAY.
B-B-BUT HARUKA! THE DOG! THE DOG IS...
I WILL KILL THAT WALKING EMBODIMENT OF STINK!
IT'S A DOG. CALM YOUR-SELF.
THAT DOG IS NO ORDINARY CREATURE!
IKE-!
WERE YOU SCARED?
WHAT'S THE MATTER?

YOU MAY HAVE DUPED YOUKO-CHAN AND HARUKA, BUT KANTAROU ICHINOMIYA SEES RIGHT THROUGH YOU.
ICHINOMIYA-SAMA WILL USE HIS UNIQUE YOUKAI-BUSTER POWERS TO EXTERMINATE YOU!
magical barrier
RRR...
NOW, SHOW ME YOUR TRUE FORM!
DEMON!

ドオン!!!
ニヤー!!
BWA HA HA HA. AT LAST, THE CURSE IS BROKEN!
NICE TO MEET YOU. I'M A ROBOT DOG FROM THE FUTURE.
WHA?!
SOME BAD GUYS PUT A CURSE ON ME, AND THAT'S HOW I CAME TO THIS WORLD. BUT THANKS TO YOU, THE CURSE IS GONE.
OH, YES.
AS A SIGN OF GRATITUDE, I'LL SHOW YOU SOMETHING GOOD.
??

I ALREADY TOLD YOU— YOUKAI AND HUMANS ARE INCOMPATIBLE.
SUCH A CONCEPT IS "DIRTY" TO YOUKAI, IS IT NOT?
YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD THINK OF YOUKAI AS IMPURE THINGS.
I'VE BEEN LIKE THIS FOR SO MANY YEARS.
SEEING THOSE SAD, SAD DREAMS...

HARUKA!
WH-WHAT WAS THAT JUST NOW?
WHERE'D THAT DOG GO?
HUH?

THAT'S THE INSANEST EXCUSE I'VE EVER HEARD! AND YOU'RE A FREAKING ACADEMIC!
YOU'RE TELLING ME HE WAS A DOG ROBOT (?) FROM THE FUTURE?!

I can't believe Kan-chan got rid of our dog!
BUT... IT'S TRUE!
Youko-chan!
COME ON, HARUKA. COULDN'T YOU SEE THERE WAS SOMETHING OFF ABOUT THAT DOG?

tactics Special Preview Comic…THE END!

HERE ARE YOUR ICED COFFEE AND SODA
THANK YOU FOR WAITING
TACTICS
HARUKA'S PART-TIME JOB TRAVELOGUE

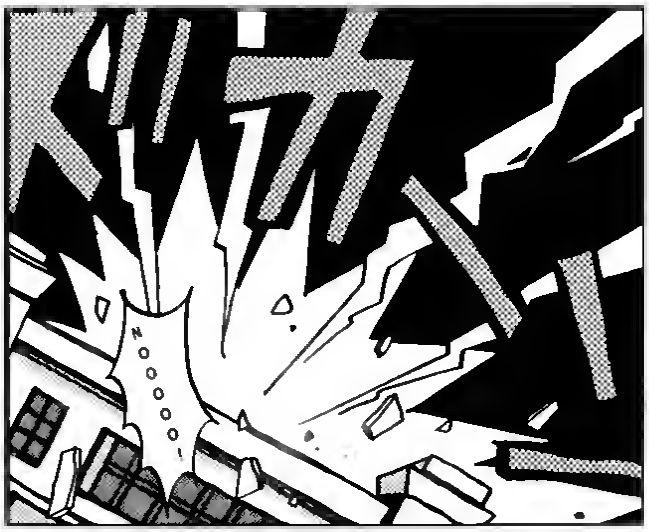
I'M GLAD I BROUGHT YOU HERE THE LADY CUSTOMERS LOVE YOU AND NOW WE CAN AFFORD TO LIVE!
YOU'RE REALLY NAILING THIS WAITER THING, HARUKA-CHAN

ぽわ〜ん

BUT... WE ORDERED ORANGE JUICE, REMEMBER?
ヒソヒソ
WHO CARES? HE'S HOT!

HI, KAN-CHAN! YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE HOW GOOD HARU--
.....
カラン
カラン
AN ORDER OF CURRY RICE!
Y-YES, SIR...?
WHY'S HE SO ANGRY?
I RENEGED ON MY PROMISE TO GO FISHING WITH HIM TODAY
ボ
ガガガガ
WHAT?!
BUT YOU TOLD ME YOU WERE FREE TODAY, HARUKA-CHAN!
HE'S A LOUSY FISHERMAN AND THEN GETS IN A SNIT, SO I SWORE TO MYSELF I'D NEVER GO AGAIN.

I HAD NO IDEA THIS ESTABLISHMENT PUTS WORMS IN THEIR CURRY! PERHAPS YOU'RE TRYING TO KILL ME?!
GRAH!
ARE YOU MOCK-ING ME?!
IT'S LIKE HE WANTS THE LAND
YUP.
HARASS-MENT
HARASS-MENT
THAT'S HARASS-MENT.
Bait
YOU DID NOT
Nuhe heh heh.
I GOT MYSELF A BIG ONE TODAY.
WEL-COME!
WHAT WILL YOU BE HAVING?
IGNORING HIM



tactics 3 THE END

IN THE NEXT VOLUME OF

tactics

Kantarou and company sign up to handle a seemingly endless stream of youkai infesting the mansion of a wealthy and powerful young businesswoman. But Haruka's sudden sneezing fits suggest that there's something mysterious and malevolent going on with rich Ms. Sakurazawa, and they may all be in grave danger. Kantarou and Haruka apparently have a new and deadly enemy...

Language and Culture Notes on *Tactics* vol. 3!

Chapter 7

~Tatsu na Hi: literally means "day of the Dragon." From the Chinese Zodiac/Calendar system, which uses animals to represent months, days and hours, this an auspicious day found once a month.

~Abe no Seimei: a famous onmyouji who would advise the emperors and the Heian government on the spiritually correct way to deal with issues thanks to all his astrological/spiritual knowledge.

~Onmyoudou (yin-yang magic): a fortune-telling system that uses calendars, astronomy, etc.

~Five elements: In Taoist practice, and much of Asian culture, the five base elements are Water, Fire, Earth, Metal and Wood, as opposed to the Western, Aristotelian elements, Water, Fire, Air, Earth and Aether.

~On amiriti un hatta: a mantra that protects the speaker from outside evils.

~Naumaku sanmanda bozaradan kan: a mantra that supposedly gives you the power of Acala The Immovable to curse your opponent.

~Taizanfukun: the ancient Chinese name for the King of Hell who judges the dead and decides their fate.

~Shikigami: a spiritual entity that can perform many mysterious acts under an onmyoji's command.

Chapter 8

~Yakko's song: Basically a kind of "nyah nyah, I won!" song.

~Hyousube: monkey-like creatures that are kin to the kappa.

Special Preview Comic One

The splash page for this section totally threw me for a loop the first time I saw it. The translator had "SUKUTEIKUTA" written as the heading in the big black box, and even with my moderate Japanese language capabilities, I was like, "WTF?!" In the original book, the word is written in katakana, the Japanese writing system most often used for writing words borrowed from other languages, including English, so usually you can sound out what it's supposed to be if you think about it long enough. So I sat there, thinking, "Sukuteikuto, sukuteikuta... what could that mean?!" for a good fifteen minutes before I realized that it was actually another historical reference! Japanese is usually read from right-to-left, but the exception is when words are horizontal, like on signs or titles, in which case it's left-to-right. However! This was not always the case. If you look at old woodblock prints from the Meiji and early Taisho period, a lot of the time the title above the image is written right-to-left. (The giveaway for me is usually when the two characters for Japan are "backwards".) And that's what the joke here is. What's SUKUTEIKUTA backwards in Japanese? TAKUTEIKUSU. "Tactics." ;-) But we reversed it in translation, because SCITCAT just looks silly.